MONTHLY ART

광주 Biennale 부산

The first English special edition of magazine highlights the 15th Gwangju Biennale with its 30th anniversary and the 2024 Busan Biennale. It features interviews with the Artistic Directors Nicolas Bourriaud (Gwangju) and Vera Mey & Philippe Pirotte (Busan), alongside insights from Korean artists. The issue also reviews the evolution of biennales from the magazine's 48-year history, offering comprehensive details, artist highlights.

Monthly Art

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Address 6F, Boyang Bldg. 19, World Cup-Ro 32-Gil, Mapo-Gu Seoul 03965, Korea
Editorial +82-2-2088-7721~8
Advertising +82-2-2088-7716
Sales +82-2-2088-7700~3
Fax +82-2-2088-7748

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In order to bolster the global reach and accessibility of Korean art, the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism and the Korea Arts Management Service have released a English-language special issue dedicated to Korean art and created in partnership with leading art criticism media in Korea. This special issue delves into the three themes of artists, biennales, and exhibitions interpreted through the unique perspectives of *Monthly Art, Art in Culture,* and *Public Art*, thereby shedding light on the multifaceted nature of Korean contemporary art. We hope that the publication at hand will offer our international readership an invaluable opportunity to better explore and appreciate the beauty and depth of Korean art.

예술경영 Korea Arts Management Service
문화체육관광부 Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism

Gwangju Busan Biennale

Index

Editorial
3
Dive into Korea Biennales+Jieon Shim

Gwangju
6
About Gwangju Biennale
8
15th Gwangju Biennale
Pansori, a soundscape of the 21st century
10
Artistic Director Interview
Nicolas Bourriaud+Jinsang Yoo
14
Artist Interview
Hyewon Kwon+Dokyung Ha
16
Artist Interview
Hyejoo Jun+Soyoung Chung
18
Six Artists Selected by *Monthly Art*
22
Gwangju Pavilion Director Interview
Mihee Ahn+Jaeyoung Kang
24
Notable Pavilions
28
Gwangju Biennale
with *Monthly Art*+Soyoung Chung
32
Tourism Spots in Gwangju+Dokyung Ha

Busan
34
About Busan Biennale
36
2024 Busan Biennale
Seeing in the Dark
38
Artistic Director Interview
Vera Mey & Philippe Pirotte+Yeon Shim Chung
42
Artist Interview
Hyunsook HongLee+Soyoung Chung
44
Jeong A Bang+Dokyung Ha
46
Six Artists Selected by *Monthly Art*
50
Busan Biennale
with *Monthly Art*+Soyoung Chung
54
Tourism Spots in Busan+Dokyung Ha

Editorial Dept.
Editor in Chief Jieon Shim
Editor Soyoung Chung
Dokyung Ha
Jaeyoung Kang
English Editor Jin Young Koh
Sojeong Kim
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Biennale

Dive into Korea Biennales

In even-numbered years, Korea buzzes with biennale excitement. Since the launch of the Gwangju Biennale in 1995, the first of its kind in Asia, numerous biennales across the country have played a crucial role in internationalizing Korean art and serving as platforms for contemporary art discourse. As part of the 2024 Korea Art Festival, alongside the international art fairs like Frieze and Kiaf, the Gwangju Biennale and Busan Biennale will open, offering an array of rich programs that explore contemporary art from multiple perspectives.

As Korea's most established and esteemed art magazine since its founding in 1976, *Monthly Art* has prepared a special English edition for the Art Week, focusing on previews of the Gwangju Biennale and Busan Biennale. Through interviews with event directors and participating artists, this edition provides in-depth insights into both the conceptualization of the biennales and the presentation of the new works. Additionally, *Monthly Art* highlights the noteworthy artists and works, offering a sneak peek of the biennales' premier programs. Having published 476 issues over 48 years, *Monthly Art* has meticulously documented the history of Korea's biennales. This special edition revisits previously published articles, offering readers a comprehensive view of the biennales' past and present towards imparting deeper understanding and appreciation.

With this preview of the two biennales, *Monthly Art* invites art professionals and enthusiasts visiting Korea to explore beyond Seoul, into the cities of Gwangju and Busan. Gwangju, as the nation's holy ground of democratization movements and a hub of cultural exchange in Asia, and Busan, as a vibrant port city at the southern tip of Korea, offer biennales that reflect their unique identities. We encourage you to immerse yourself in the themes and artworks proposed by the biennales while also savoring the distinct flavors and charms of these cities.

As Korea's first art magazine, *Monthly Art* has led the direction of Korean art journalism for 48 years, both in print and, more recently, online. With in-depth content covering global art news, issues, expert reviews, and commentaries *Monthly Art* remains the most influential art magazine in Korea, trusted by professionals for its balanced, independently edited content. This special edition, produced with the support of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and the Korea Arts Management Service, is dedicated to introducing the current Korean art scene. We are honored to present an in-depth look at Korea's biennales and artists, and we hope this guide will enhance your biennale experience.

Editor in Chief
Jieon Shim

Gwangju / Busan Biennale

Artistic Director Interview
Nicolas Bourriaud
10

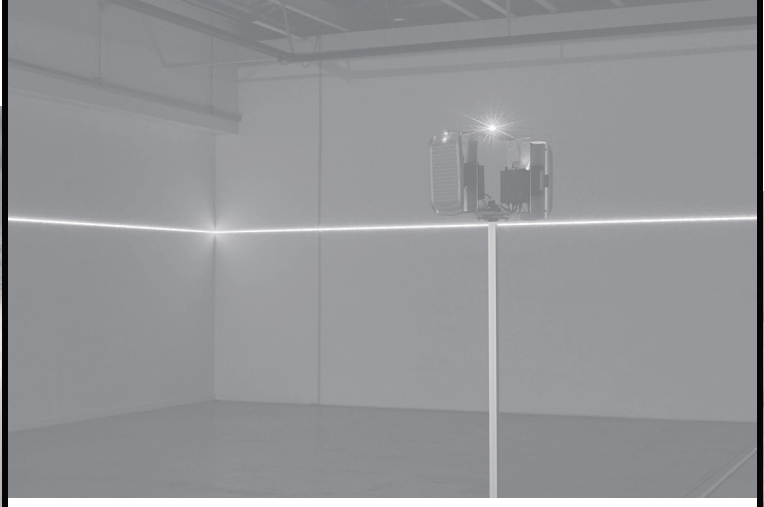
Artist Interview
Hyewon Kwon
14

Gwangju Pavilion Director Interview
Mihee Ahn
22

Notable Pavilions
24

Artist Interview
Hyunsook HongLee
42

Artist Interview
Jeong A Bang
44



Artist Interview
Hyejoo Jun

16

Six Artists Selected
by *Monthly Art*

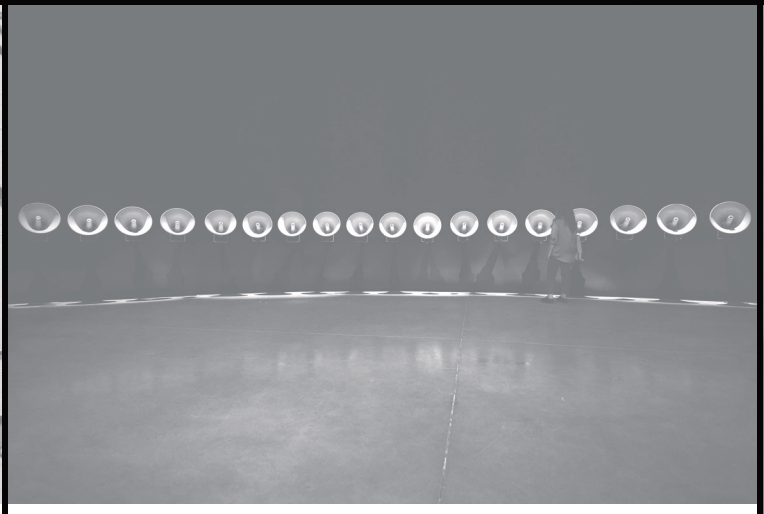
18

Gwangju Biennale
with *Monthly Art*

28

Artistic Director Interview
Vera Mey & Philippe Pirote

38



Six Artists Selected
by *Monthly Art*

46

Busan Biennale
with *Monthly Art*

도시와 문화를 관통한
현대미술 읽기

김성원 | 동덕여대 겸임

2002 부산비엔날레의 〈현대미술전〉에는 부산이라는 도시의 특성을 현지 프로젝트의 방식으로 작업한 작품이 다수 출품되었다. 난해하고 관념적인 현대미술의 난이도를 낮추어 관객과 함께 공감할 수 있는 장으로 만들고자 했다.

첸 첸은 수레를 발명한 중국이 급격히 발달한 현대적 교통수단과 충
하면서 발생할 수 있는 위기를 수천 개의 자전거 타이어로 된 거
한 용의 조산(早産)으로 은유하고 있다. 중국의 전통문화와 현대문화의
돌과 갈등을 상징적으로 표현한 작업이다. 실제로 이 수천개의 자전거 바
는 그 동안 세계 각국으로 여행하며 직 · 간접적으로 문화 충돌의 위기를
달했으며, 급기야는 용의 모습이 사라질 정도로 훼손되었던 작품이다. 이
에 부산비엔날레가 이 작품의 복원에 참여함으로써 다시 건재한 모습으
등장할 수 있었던 첸 첸의 〈조산(早産)〉은 우리를 압도하는 조형적 용
과 더불어, 우리에게 상징적으로 '문화의 충돌과 갈등 그리고 그 위기
대한 질문을 유도하고 있다. 이 작품은 '문화에서 문화로' 라는 대주제를
방하는 부산비엔날레와 '도시는 문화라고 부르는 삶의 방식이 가시화되
공간' 이라는 해석과 함께 '도시성' 을 통한 현대미술 읽기를 제안하는
대미술전〉에서 소개되고 있어 그 의미가 한층 더 부각되고 있다. 교통수
의 발달은 도시간의 거리를 좁히면서 다양한 문화와의 만남을 촉진해 왔

50

About Gwan

The Gwangju Biennale, the first art event of its kind in Asia, began in 1995. That year was significant in the art world as it marked the 100th anniversary of the Venice Biennale and the opening of the Korean Pavilion, which was the last national pavilion in the Giardini. For Korea, it was the 50th anniversary of the country's liberation from Japanese rule. The Gwangju Biennale also presented an excellent opportunity to expand the art world's perspectives into Asia, which had been focused on the West after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Biennale was established with a desire to let Asian art flourish in the historically significant city of Gwangju, the location of the May 18 Democratic Uprising that, in 1980, resisted Korea's military dictatorship.

The inaugural edition of the Biennale aimed to showcase Asia's unique creativity under the theme Beyond Borders. It divided the world into seven cultural regions and highlighted the distinct characteristics of each cultural zone through various themes such as

gju Biennale

boundaries, travel, hybridity, otherness, and harmony. Over the next 14 editions, the Biennale continued to explore diverse themes, engage in art historical discourses, and expand the horizon of art beyond local and national boundaries.

In celebration of the event's 30th anniversary, *Monthly Art* interviews Artistic Director Nicolas Bourriaud to reflect on the 15th Gwangju Biennale and highlights two prominent Korean female artists and eight noteworthy participating artists.

Since 2018, the biennale has included national pavilion exhibitions, the number of which has grown to 31 for the upcoming edition. We're taking a look at the pavilions curated by countries and institutions, in addition to featuring an interview with Director Mihee Ahn, who will oversee the first exhibition held at the Gwangju Pavilion this year.

Join us in exploring Gwangju Biennale as the event unfolds throughout its vibrant and historic host city.

15th Gwangju Biennale: *Pansori, a soundscape of the 21st century* 2024.9.7—12.1

A Soundscape Of The 21st Century 모두의 울림
PANSORI 판소리
2024.9.7.—12.1.
15th Gwangju Biennale 제15회 광주비엔날레
Venues Gwangju Biennale Exhibition Hall and select locations in Gwangju Metropolitan City 장소 광주비엔날레 전시관 등 광주광역시 일원
Hosts Gwangju Biennale Foundation, Gwangju Metropolitan City
주최·주관 (재)광주비엔날레, 광주광역시

For its 30th anniversary, the 15th Gwangju Biennale gathers 72 artists from 30 countries; *Pansori, a soundscape of the 21st century* is an attempt to map the complexity of the contemporary world. Border conflicts, anti-migrant walls, confinement, social distancing, segregation policies... These seemingly dissimilar topics share a common point, which is space and its political organization. The main effect of climate change is the apparition of a new topology, a new world map in which carbon dioxide and urban life, desertification and migration, deforestation and social struggles, destruction of animal ecosystems and vegetal invasions, all have become brutally interconnected. *Pansori, a soundscape of the 21st century* is an operatic exhibition about the spaces we inhabit, from our housing to the human occupation of the planet. And as landscapes are also soundscapes, the exhibition is built as a narrative connecting musical and visual forms. Dating back to the 17th century, pansori is a Korean musical genre anchored in its native territory, a symbol of the relationships between sound and space. In Korean, pansori literally means "the noise from the public place," which might also be translated as the voice of the subalterns. The 15th Gwangju Biennale intends to recreate the original spirit of pansori, presenting artists who explore contemporary space through dialogue with the living forms around them. Art, too, is a specific place, one which allows us to rethink the space shared among humans, machines, animals, spirits, and organic life—our relational space. Space is also a knot that connects all emancipation struggles, from feminism to decolonization to LGBTQ+ rights; the division of space is always geopolitical. A number of artists in this exhibition address these spatial issues by representing contemporary landscapes and urban conditions, saturated with human presence, or the effects of industrialization on natural ecosystems. Some open up the space itself by engaging in dialogues with machines, animals, bacteria and other life forms, or examining the molecular composition of the world. And others are working at a cosmic scale, inventing a contemporary shamanism. From extreme density to desertic expanses, *Pansori, a soundscape of the 21st century* presents itself as an immersible opera.

Exhibition Curation

Most of the artists' exhibitions are held at the main Biennale exhibition hall. Each hall is harmoniously organized without fixed partitions and is metaphorically divided into three sections: "Clashing Sounds (Larsen Effect)," which reflects on population saturation, dense housing, and environmental relations; "Overlapping Sounds (Polyphony)," which expresses the complexity of coexisting human and non-human entities in the global space; and "Primordial Sound," depicting the lives of non-human beings. The corridors and ramps connecting the five exhibition halls are composed of commissioned works that link each section.

In addition to the main hall, there are eight locations across the city Gwangju where the works are displayed in a manner suited to the characteristics of each artist's work. Among these locations, artists participate in everyday spaces at the Resonance/Yang Nim, engaging with the audience and seeking to establish a cultural belt within the urban area through sound projects and installation art.

*Participating artists for each exhibition hall can be found on the map.

15th Gwangju Biennale Curatorial Team

Artistic Director
Nicolas Bourriaud

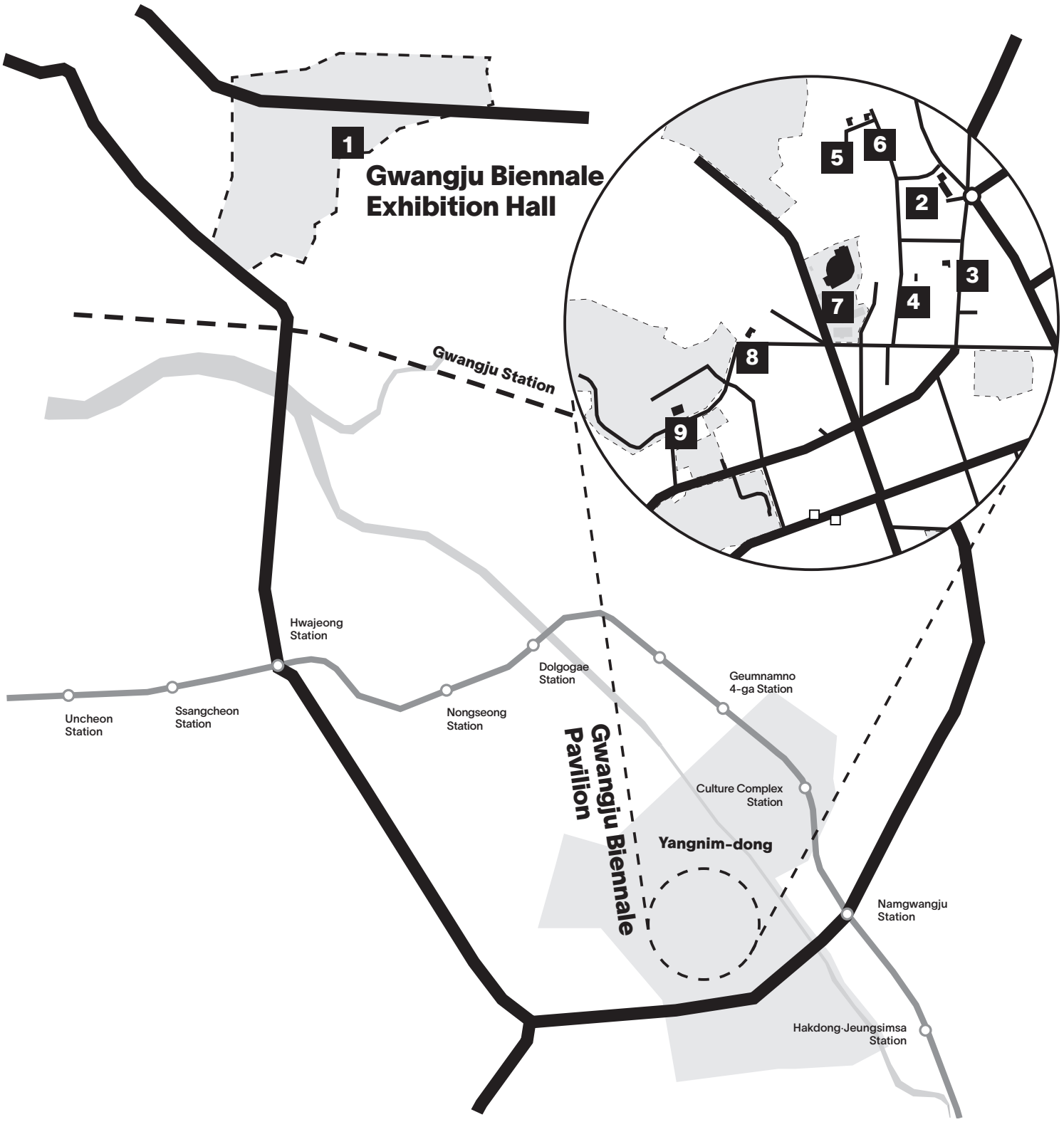
Curators
Barbara Lagié
Kuralai Abdukhalikova
Sophia Park

Assistant Curators
Jade Barget
Euna Lee

Major Exhibition Venues
The Gwangju Biennale will be held at nine locations in Gwangju, including the main exhibition hall.

Tuesdays–Sundays 10:00–18:00
Closed on Mondays (excluding September 9th and 16th)

1 **(main) Gwangju Biennale Exhibition Hall**
111, Biennale-ro, Buk-gu, Gwangju
2 **Yangnim Culture Centre**
30, Seoseopyeong-gil, Nam-gu, Gwangju
Artist: Jayi Kim, Hyeongsuk Kim
3 **Podonamu Art Space**
79-1, Baekseo-ro, Nam-gu, Gwangju
—— Artist: Andrius Arutiunian
4 **Han Boo Chul Gallery**
3-10, Baekseo-ro 81beon-gil, Nam-gu, Gwangju
—— Artist: Angela Bulloch
5 **Han Hee Won Museun Of Art**
27-6, Yangchon-gil, Nam-gu, Gwangju
—— Artist: YoungEun Kim
6 **Yangnim Salon**
27-2, Yangchon-gil, Nam-gu, Gwangju
—— Artist: Marina Rosenfeld
7 **Yangnim Old Police Station**
56, Jejung-ro, Nam-gu, Gwangju
—— Artist: Saâdane Afif
8 **Empty House**
8-1, Jejung-ro 47beon-gil, Nam-gu, Gwangju
—— Artist: Mira Mann
9 **Horanggasinamu Art Polygon**
22, Jejung-ro 47beon-gil, Nam-gu, Gwangju
—— Artist: Julian Abraham "TOGAR", Hyoungsan Jun, Lydia Ourahmane, Soomin Shon



“Art teaches us something deeper, which concerns the very structures behind the news. I consider art as a kind of editing table for reality; we all see the same film, but artists propose alternative versions. The topic is the same for all of us, but we need art to see it differently. For example, space is a very common, almost banal theme concerning every one of us, from a bus driver to a quantum physicist. But the visitors of Gwangju Biennale 15 will be able to examine this very mundane theme through the lenses of 72 artists who all have a very specific way of addressing space, translating it into forms that allow us to think differently.”

Artistic Director

NICOLAS BOURRIAUD

The theme of the 2024 Gwangju Biennale is Pansori, a Soundscape of the 21st century. This theme centers "Pansori", a traditional song-theater form originating from Jeolla Province, where Gwangju is located. You interpret 'sound' through three types: the collision and feedback of nearby sounds caused by the Larsen effect; the harmonies created by polyphony; and the cosmic and ecological annotations from the echo of the primordial Big Bang, similar to "Om".

The exhibition conceptualizes a topology of the Anthropocene that divides into three sections, each one featuring aspatial figure of climate change corresponding to unique sonic phenomenon. Visitors will follow a simple narrative, going from the human density of urban space to the non-human worlds, either microscopic or cosmic—from a saturated planet to the search for the "big outdoors." In the first section, two sound emitters or receivers produce a "feedback effect," disquieting sound signifying crowding, or lack of space. This section likens our planet to an echo chamber wherein everything is contiguous, saturated with human activities, so both interhuman and interspecies relations intensify. Relatedly, the anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro has observed how industrialized countries relegate living creatures altogether to merely constituting part of the environment—like an opera whose musicians would have been muted, leaving the singer alone. The second section contrasts the first through polyphony, one that harmonizes the world's complexity and acknowledges that we live in a multi-focused and multi-layered universe. The last section, primordial sound, is the sound of the origins, the Chinese "Qi", the Buddhist "Om", or the first noise of the big bang. In the third section, artists explore the non-human world, the "two immensities" that are in front of us: the cosmos and the molecular world. In a way, artists actively look for distance in a world of high-speed transport and immediate communication, and they do it either by observing the vastness of the cosmos or the minuscules of the molecular world.

Since Pansori is a compound word combining 'Pan' (place) and 'Sori' (sound), the concept of place or space linked to the meaning of sound seems to stem from this. I would like to hear your detailed interpretation of this.

In Korean, Pansori can also be interpreted as 'the voice of the subalterns.' I like its minimalistic form: it is nothing more than 'lyrics plus rhythm,' with only a singer and a drum. It evokes something essential. In the same way Pansori singers practice storytelling with a lyrical or epic style accompanied by a drumming whose different beats are connected to specific regions of Korea, the exhibition is built as a narrative about the spaces we live in.

The upcoming Biennale is taking place amidst global issues such as the war in Ukraine, the conflict in the Gaza Strip, the new Cold War evident in the US-China conflict, and the worldwide economic recession, etc. There is significant interest in what message the 2024 Gwangju Biennale can convey in such circumstances. What message do you hope the audience will take away from this Biennale?

Remember that, in Europe, most of the masterpieces of the Renaissance period were produced during the Italian wars lasting from 1494 to 1559. It was a period of crisis no less than our times. This does not mean that artists should turn a blind eye to the circumstances of their times. On the contrary. But art should never be reduced to a commentary on current events; rather, art represents a deeper level of understanding reality, one that goes beyond subjectivity. Of course, no serious artist lives in a bubble, **but art is not here to provide simple opinions, nor simple information—we have newspapers for that.** What I am interested in is the way artists reflect and put into perspective the huge disruptions caused by climate change or other important social and political evolutions of our times. Transfixed by tumultuous news, we don't necessarily see the long-term evolutions or the concrete effects of these events (climate change, conflicts, economic crisis, migratory issues, etc.); however, **art teaches us something deeper, which concerns the very structures behind the news.** I consider art as a kind of editing table for reality; we all see the same film, but artists propose alternative versions. The topic is the same for all of us, but we need art to see it differently. For example, space is a very common, almost banal theme concerning every one of us, from a bus driver to a quantum physicist. But the visitors of Gwangju Biennale 15 will be able to examine this very mundane theme through the lenses of 72 artists who all have a very specific way of addressing space, translating it into forms that allow us to think differently.

The list of participating artists for this exhibition includes 72 artists from 30 countries. While well-known artists such as Angela Bulloch, Liam Gillick, and Philippe Parreno are included, many lesser-known artists to Koreans also appear. Could you share your own insights or commentary related to the selection of these participating artists?

I always took for granted that biennales have no specific rules; that is why each one is governed by a different curatorial practice. For Gwangju Biennale, I decided that every participating artist should be living, allowing the exhibition to decouple from the bygone. Maybe this arose from personal reaction to recent Venice biennales that exhibited an important number of early avant-garde artists—particularly forgotten ones—in an attempt to rewrite art history from a different perspective. Bucking this trend, I opted to showcase today's energy and map today's art, with different generations of artists comprising my waypoints. The oldest one in the exhibition is John Dowell, who is in his 90's. Searching in a book shop, I have found an old catalogue from Arturo Schwartz gallery in Milan, published in 1973, and I was amazed by Dowell's work and how it was responding to the theme by mixing musical scores and microscopic figures. While teaching in the US, he's never really shown at an international level. Even more, a huge majority of the selected artists are only emerging. To complete the list, I chose to work with some artists who became very important in the last two decades, and participated in my first exhibitions in the 1990s, like Parreno, Bulloch or Gillick. Biennale is an opportunity for us to revitalize our work together after a long period. Interestingly, these artists rarely appear in international group shows, because they have an agenda of solo shows and big projects on their own.

Specifically, 12 Korean artists are included in this list. From what perspective were these artists selected? What inspiration did you draw from them?

First, I draft an initial list with the names of artists precisely matching the exhibition's concept irrespective of nationality. Afterwards, I begin conducting research; the first thing I do is review my own notes regarding every interesting artwork seen in galleries, art fairs or exhibitions, and even artists mentioned by friends. Then I check portfolio websites, try to visit artists' studios or, when possible, have a coffee with the artists themselves. Nevertheless, a biennale is also a moment for revealing a new generation of artists, and I always ensure approximately ten percent of exhibiting artists is local. I adhered to this guideline in Istanbul or Taipei, but the percentage increased in Gwangju because I encountered a very promising generation of young artists. I also took care of including artists from the city itself, requesting portfolio submissions be sent to me. The criterions for all selected artists remains the same: first, the work has to be solid formally, with an original concept; not only that, but the work needs to correspond to the theme, meaning that the artists already integrated those topics in their practice, or are able to address them.

You have previously curated major exhibitions in Asia, such as the Taipei Biennale in 2014 and the Istanbul Biennale in 2019. Since you frequently visit Asia, could you share any special points or experiences you have felt while curating exhibitions in Asia?

Every context is different, and you can find very diverse issues and expectations from one country to another, even from one city to another. As a curator working at the international level, you need to develop a sense of adaptation, a desire to learn from the place serving as the host of your exhibition. Nothing should ever be taken for granted.

Besides the aforementioned global issues, there are concerns about the impact of technological advancements like artificial intelligence on the labor market, economic phenomena due to the new geopolitical factors such as large-scale supply chain adjustments, problems caused by the imbalance of energy supply and rapid fossil fuel shortages, meteorological disasters due to the global warming from carbon emissions, and social divisions and polarization caused by the geopolitical demographic changes. You have much experience of collaborating with contemporary artists. How are artists responding to such a grim outlook in these times?

What is highly interesting is the diversity of those answers. I can refer to two disparate examples: Max Hooper Schneider and Ambera Wellmann. For Hooper Schneider, who lives in California, the space-time of the Anthropocene is characterized by the porosity between all the elements of the universe. According to him, we live in a state of total promiscuity wherein nothing is impenetrable anymore, and space is made up of a more or less distant, but real, chain of contacts. He leans into catastrophe, accompanied by a dream of isolation and being sealed. Hence the rising importance in contemporary art of various versions of a container. Hooper Schneider sees this as being the dominant image of our times, and I quote him here: "Whether it is an aquarium, terrarium, paludarium, refugium, house, resort, hospital, summer camp, Marxism, Monism, or Scientology, we all find the containers that suit us best." All systems are an aquarium, or a protection. But even something that is vacuum-sealed will leak; there is no closed system. As fatalistic as he is deeply vitalist, Hooper Schneider associates leaks with life itself, and life always emerges from ruins. In the paintings of the Canadian-born Ambera Wellmann, space is dissolving, and there is no up, no down, no right, no left, no planes or volumes. She represents the world after the Big Bang as a primal soup where contemporary bodies are immersed, interpenetrating each other while absorbing the things and beings that surround them.

Surrounded by powerful nations while simultaneously functioning as an economic, political, and cultural hub, Korea holds a unique and challenging geopolitical position. What are your thoughts on working as a director of Biennale in Korea, including its strengths and weaknesses, and any particularly impressive aspects?

Two words immediately spring to mind: openness and curiosity. Korean culture appears to be welcoming, which explains why its music and its cinema attract a worldwide audience. Meanwhile, Korean artists, like Haegue Yang, enjoy global renown. With respect to weakness, Korea's formalism that can sometimes prove surprising when excessive, but escape routes always present themselves.

If possible, could you give us a preview of the aesthetic themes of your upcoming book or project?

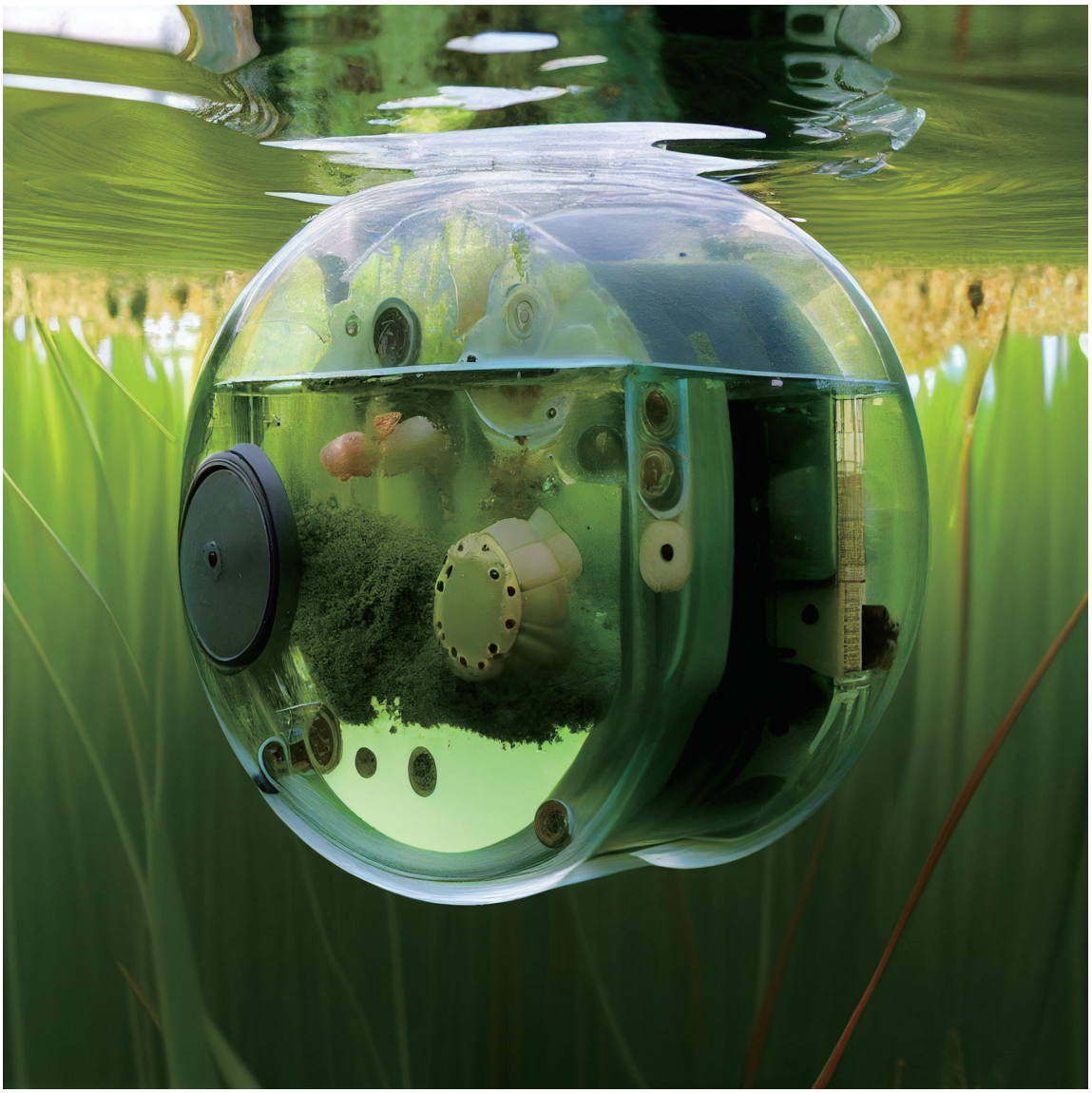
In my notebooks I've identified several exhibitions I would like to work on. I think it will now become important for me to move beyond the thematic highways of the period we live in, such as the preoccupation with the environment and post-colonialism. I can say that because, in 2014, I curated the first biennale about the Anthropocene. I see the necessity to do a quantum leap. Secondly, I am finishing a huge book about the history of art from a modern vantage point that traces back to prehistoric art. Then, I am taking notes for an essay about the potential cultural transformations allowed by feminism. Being a man does not disqualify me from writing about feminism... Anyway, I never write about topics that are too close to me; **we need distance to see clearly. This is an issue young curators should consider—being a stranger is the most powerful position,** and, even if you are declared 'illegitimate' to write about anything, you are not.

Interview by **Jinsang Yoo**
Professor, Department of Intermedia Art, Kaywon University of Art & Design

Nicolas Bourriaud
Nicolas Bourriaud concentrates on art practices that address human relationships and communication, and often intersect with, technology, media, and networks, in his works, such as: Relational Aesthetics (1998), Postproduction (2002), The Radicant (2009), and Inclusions: Aesthetics of the Capitalocene (2020). The discourse of relational aesthetics, which deals with concepts of relationships, mediation, participation, and interaction, is often cited as one of the defining concepts in contemporary art. Bourriaud founded and co-directed the Palais de Tokyo, Paris (1999–2006) and was Gulbenkian Curator for Contemporary Art at Tate Britain in London (2007–2010). He has helmed large-scale exhibitions, including Tate Triennial 2009, Taipei Biennale 2014, and Istanbul Biennale 2019. In 2022, he curated PLANET B. Climate Change and the New Sublime at Palazzo Bollani, Venice for Radicants, an international curatorial cooperative which he created earlier the same year.

Artist

HyEwOn KwOn



Impossible World (Still) 3 Channel Video, 3 Channel Audio 7min 11sec 2023

"Things like how we aurally interpret space should be visualized in order to be understood. Therefore, in my work this time, video serves not as a medium or form but rather as a tool for mediation, a means to communicate with people."

Interview by **Dokyung Ha**

Tell us about your entry for the Gwangju Biennale.

The title of my piece, *Cave of Portals*, derives from a lava cave on Jeju Island. While myriad ways exist to explore a cave, I adopted methods used by acousticians. I invested significant time ruminating about how I could understand the cave, and the exhibited work will be a presentation of my contemplation.

You used a lava cave as the subject of your work. How did you start this project?

I started the lava cave project in 2019 while participating in a residency program in Jeju. Although some caves in Jeju are open to tourists, there are far more that are not. During that time, I had the opportunity to enter Seonggul, a natural cave and an unregistered natural heritage that, while being managed, remains unopen to the public. Thus, the cave itself lacked installations for safety and convenience, such as wooden decks or lightings, and I had never experienced anything like it before. I walked into the dark and rugged terrain relying on my hiking boots, headlamp, and helmet. It was an incredibly captivating experience wherein I couldn't perceive the passage of time and space; that is, I felt as though I were lost in an infinite space.

Your experience in the cave seems to align with your interest in time and space.

Exactly. Losing my sense of time and space was very intriguing to me and inspired me to begin this project. Another fascinating aspect of this work was interacting with various experts—such as botanists, speleologists, and acousticians—and observing the devices they use. I closely studied how each expert approaches and understands the cave, and what they seek to discover within it. By researching their methods I intended to borrow and incorporate them into my work.

The main theme of this year's Biennale focuses on sound. How does visual imagery or video integrate into your work this time?

In some parts I had no choice but to visualize sound because certain sounds fall outside the range audible to humans. Irrespective of this challenge, I believe visualization of the space, even if aurally uninterpretable, can improve understanding it. In this year's work, video serves not as a medium or form but rather as a tool for mediation—a means to communicate with people.

You frequently used the term "mediation" to describe this work. What does it mean to you?

I have a keen interest in the shamanistic practices in Jeju and have observed many rituals. Jeju, along with Bali, Indonesia, is one of the regions where traditional shamanistic practices are well-preserved. In Jeju, shamans are called "simbang," and their clients are called "dangol" (literally "frequenter"). Fascinatingly, these simbang shamans possess extensive knowledge, not only of local lore but also of residents' personal histories. This dedication to their communities allows shamans to embody what I consider the concept of "mediation." I researched their culture extensively and found the way simbang conduct rituals for their clients particularly intriguing. These rituals, which can last three to four days, resemble a form of narrative. Simbang recounts the history of the client from the very beginning, retracing the arrival of ancestors to the region and then detailing the local land's history. The narration tells of how a legendary grandmother created the island, what kind of village emerged, and how the first shamanistic rituals took place, gradually linking these tales to the present time and space coordinates over three to four days. Through this process, the shaman identifies the client's place in time and space, afterwards conveying his/her wishes to the gods, saying "this person living here has such history and wants this." My research inspired this idea of "mediation," one that I presently apply to the cave setting towards producing a network of interconnected beings linking past to present.

Were there any unexpected and interesting encounters while preparing this project?

There were many unexpected occurrences during the production process (laughs). One memorable incident was seeing changes in the cave in my recent visit. The cave was very dry when I was there in 2019, but, on my recent visit, the cave had become more humid, resulting in different measurements. There were also changes in the animals and creatures inhabiting the cave. The number of bats had decreased while the number of snakes had increased, which was entirely unexpected. I consider the cave itself a mediator, and I want to reveal the network of connections between various entities it mediates, but now that includes snakes. Snakes are very difficult to detect, and my staff find them frightening, so we are trying to figure out how to deal with this new challenge.

It sounds like a fascinating project. Lastly, do you have plans for overseas projects or places you wish to research aside from your current work?

I am continuously updating my list of potential overseas projects. While working on the previous project, I learned that numerous devices are necessary to study water, and that there are so many things we can explore using water as a medium. Water allows us to think beyond familiar land-based, gravity-centric perspectives, and that is why I am so fascinated by water.

While researching Jeju, I was intrigued by the cultural belts that traveled along ocean currents for long periods. Consequently, I'm investigating regions like Okinawa, Bali, Hawaii, and Scotland. I heard that remnants of Scottish shipwrecks have washed up on Jeju's shores even recently due to ocean currents. I want to conduct in-depth research on the trajectories of cultures formed by these currents. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic required me to cancel a project focusing on the journey of plants in containers, which I now hope to resume. Most farms supplying tropical plants to botanical gardens are based in the Philippines; once shipped from these farms, the plants spend 20 to 30 days aboard a vessel undergoing quarantine and virus testing before arriving at gardens. I found this journey intriguing—there must be a lot of hard work involved keeping plants alive while they're being transported in these containers—and I still wish to experience the voyage alongside tropical flora.

Photo by Hongsoon Park

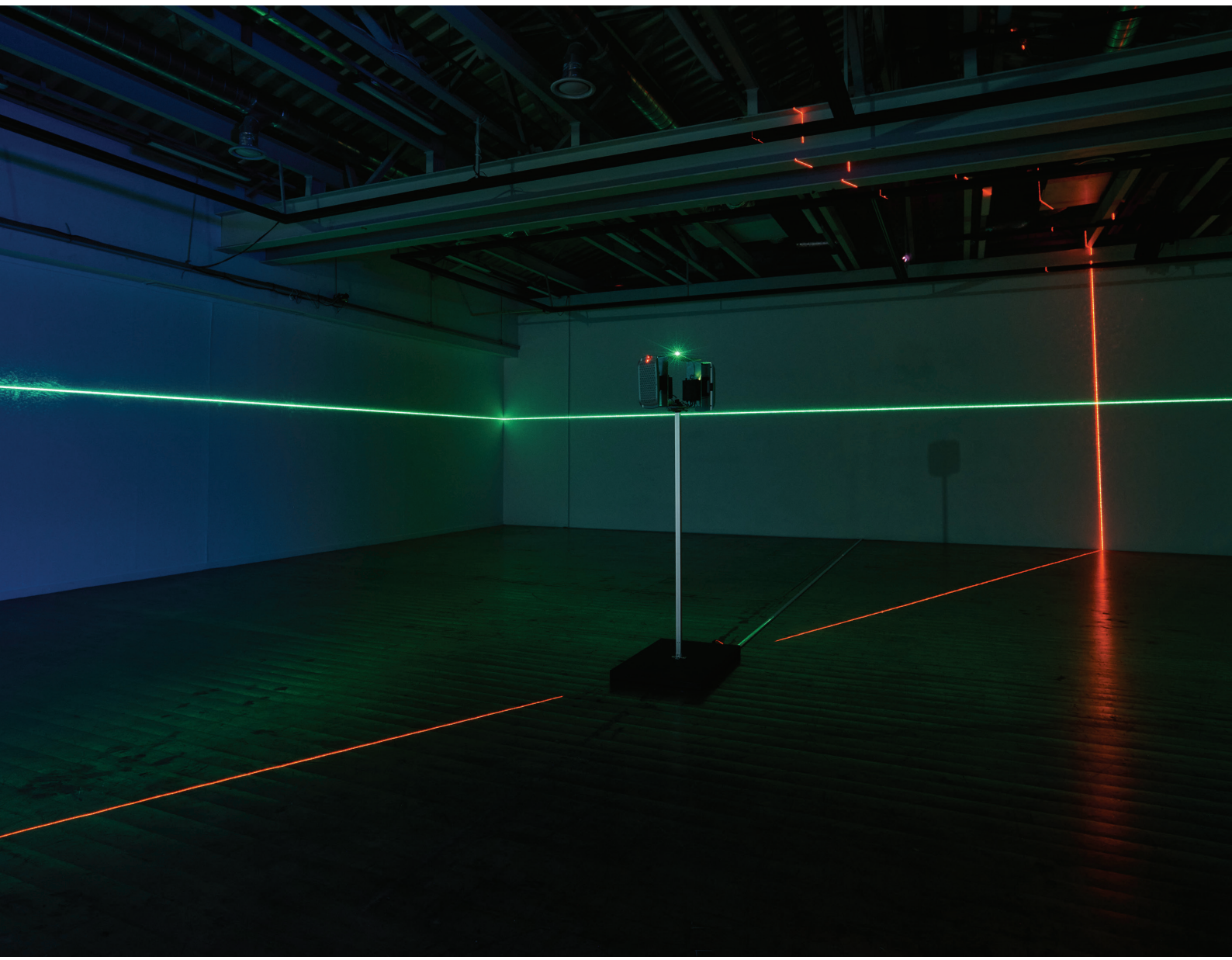
Hyewon Kwon (b. 1975)
Hyewon Kwon's video installations explore various devices that shape our perspectives and perceptions, ranging from modern period tourist postcards to sensors and satellites, revealing the social and psychological contexts embedded within these devices and examining their limitations. Recently, she has been delving into the limitations and possibilities found in systems and devices designed to observe and understand nature and reflecting these findings into unique experiences in exhibition settings.

Artist

HyeJoo Jun

"I hope to increase such understanding through the experience offered by my work. Ultimately, this is what I aim to achieve through my art: To create works that not only stand apart as fantasies disconnected from everyday life but also have tangible impacts on our daily lives."

Interview by **Soyoung Chung**



Body Check 2009 Seoul Art Space Geumcheon Installation view 2009

Your works—such as *Body Check* (2020), a kinetic sound art piece that reflects the reality of being controlled and monitored without consent or agreement in a modern, automated society, and *Hummer* (2022), which incorporates urban noise and hyper-directional sound to archive invisible pollen and waves that affect the body—seem unrestricted by theme or medium. I'm curious about where you draw inspiration from and how you connect it to your work.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, I've been consistently working under the keyword 'microscopic ecosystems,' but if my work seems unrestricted, I think it's because I have a broad interest in various fields and forms of expression. Previously, if someone asked me to explain myself, I struggled because I couldn't simply define myself as a media artist or an installation artist due to the diverse mediums I handle. But now, I enjoy the freedom that comes with not being fixed to a specific identity. I like to research topics, ones that catch my interest either in everyday life or through unexpected encounters, and then expand on them and express them via my work. Often, the next project emerges from this process of connecting with other disciplines. By exploring the medium that best embodies the chosen theme, I create works that are most effective in conveying the concept.

Your works often feature dramatic elements in the way they use lighting, sound, and movement. What factors are most important to you when creating your pieces?

I studied in Germany for about ten years, where my focus was on electronic media and stage design. Rather than art existing solely as an object, whether it be abstract or figurative, I found myself more fascinated by stage direction, which involves planning and producing the entire stage. In stage direction, everything from the script, costumes, movement, lighting, and sound is carefully considered and planned from the entrance to the exit; I wanted to showcase my work in the exhibition space with the same level of detail. That's why, I think deeply about how the audience will experience and sensorially engage with my work from the initial stages of conceptualizing a piece. I approach the exhibition space as if it were a stage and prepare my work accordingly.

Does the way you visualize your work influence the research and themes?

The initial process involves research, collection, and thematic ideation; upon choosing a theme, I then consider how best to implement it. The stages of collecting and researching are not very different from those in other research fields. I often receive guidance and collaborate with experts from various disciplines. While participating in the Jan van Eyck Residency Program in the Netherlands last year, for example, I engaged with, and was influenced by, the ecological perspectives of plant breeders who were not artists. Likewise, my work involving pollen incorporated advice from a palynology expert based out of the Korea Institute of Geoscience and Mineral Resources. When bringing expert driven insights to my exhibition, I try to imitate the methods used in those fields—such as microscopes and sample collection techniques—to create visual expressions in the most effective way possible.

Could you tell us about the work you're submitting to the Gwangju Biennale?

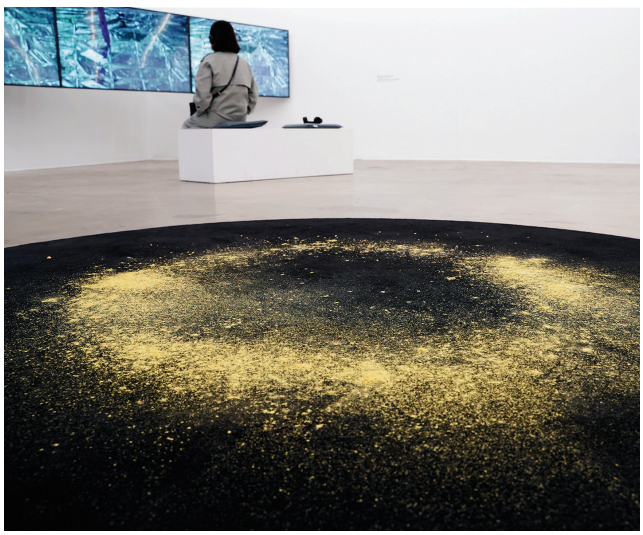
The biennale requested that all works should harmonize without any partitions or separations, so controlling lighting and sound in such an open space is crucial. Whereas my previous work compelled the viewer to follow a predetermined path, this time I'm focusing on enabling the audience to grasp the same message and understanding even when moving autonomously.

What message do you want to convey through *Hummer*?

Hummer originated from the concept of urban noise. I started the project hoping society would empathize more with individuals sensitive to noise instead of dismissing their discomfort as mere hypersensitivity. There, people suffer social stigma due to symptoms like ringing in the ears only they can hear. Rather than isolating or marginalizing these sufferers, we should become more aware of the subtle, organic substances and sounds in our environment; I hope to increase such understanding through the experience offered by my work. Ultimately, this is what I aim to achieve through my art: To create works that not only stand apart as fantasies disconnected from everyday life but also have tangible impacts on our daily lives.

What are your future plans?

I will also be participating in a group exhibition at the Seoul Museum of Art that coincides with the Gwangju Biennale. Drawing connections to the research I conducted during my residency in the Netherlands, I am preparing to showcase a work related to the historical process of new species emergence that incorporates historical archive and technological process alongside digital drawings and silk screen images. I am currently experimenting with methods of using pollen in silk screening. Ultimately, the visual execution is the most crucial phase; that is, the artwork comes to fruition through the artist's intervention with the information. I anticipate that this will continue to be the focus of my attention until the very end.



Yellow Border 2021 *Nothing makes itself* Arko Art Center Installation view 2021

Photo by Hongsoon Park

Hyejoo Jun(b. 1985)
The work of Hyejoo Jun explores the relationships between the environment, invisible particles, and human perception. The artist creates audiovisual works and uses various found objects, images, and sound. Her work focuses on ecosystems and how they are interconnected, particularly concerning the microscopic particles present in the air. To visualize and manipulate these particles, she uses media that she converts into light and sound forms to represent their ecological impact.

Six Artists Selected by *Monthly Art*

Bianca Bondi

Born in South Africa

Based in Paris, Bianca Bondi's installation works are grounded in a multidisciplinary approach and perspective that encompasses life sciences and the occult. Through chemical reactions in saltwater, she reactivates ordinary objects and induces transformations. Her approach utilizing the alterations of materials with unique properties and symbolism ultimately aims to reveal the interconnectedness of matter, the cycle of life and death, and impermanence. By representing the inherent vitality of materials, she offers experiences that transcend visual perception. Bondi's profound interest in both ecology as a science and the occult leads her to combine these domains in an interdisciplinary manner, altering the inherent aura of objects. Her work for the 15th Gwangju Biennale will continue this approach, while considering new environments and locations to reveal poetic outcomes with close connections to the site.

Dora Budor

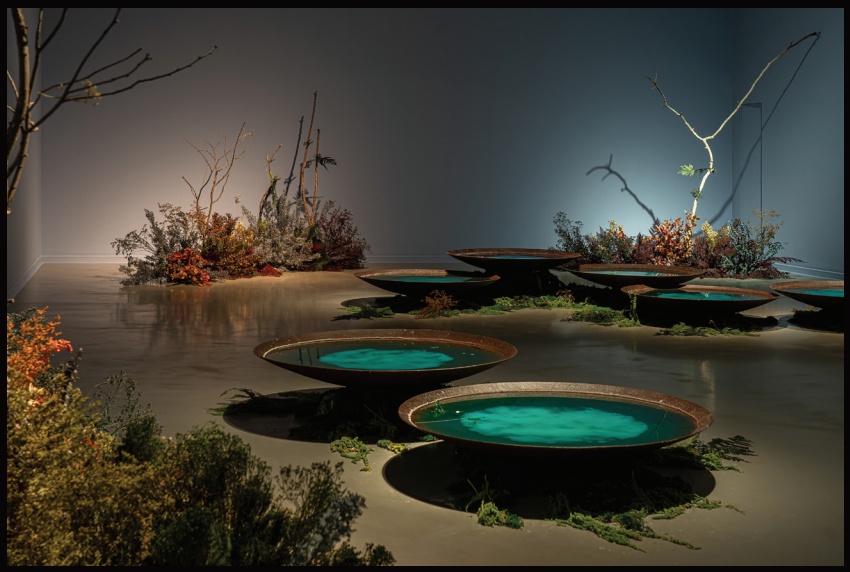
Born in Croatia

Dora Budor's video work, centered on investigations and various artistic interventions in urban public spaces, uses Little Island as its backdrop. Little Island is a small park located on the pier of Manhattan's West Side in New York. Known as part of the Chelsea Piers, this location was famous in the 1970s and 80s as a spot for gay cruising and was also where artist Gordon Matta-Clark's *Day's End* was installed. Additionally, this area is renowned for offering panoramic views of the downtown New York and its surroundings. The redevelopment of Little Island involved British designer Thomas Heatherwick in its planning stages, and aimed to recreate the High Line, a famous New York landmark. Budor's project reflects on the broader context of increasing property values driven by converting industrial facilities into tourist attractions, engaging with the critical issues overshadowed by administrative goals. Instead of merely exposing the picturesque landscapes and lofty ideals as illusions pursued by contemporary urban development, she focuses on disrupting these narratives using the logic of architecture and design. In her video work, the camera deviates from expected paths and intentionally fails to capture the anticipated follies. Budor's contribution to the 15th Gwangju Biennale, which presents a comprehensive examination of contemporary spaces, also raises broad critical points about urban space creation.

YoungEun Kim

Born in South Korea

YoungEun Kim considers sound and listening as socio-political and historical products and actions. Her recent work explores how the meanings of sound and listening are constructed, how they have developed, and what decolonial possibilities they hold within specific geopolitical contexts. Her piece *A Story of Oseonbo: Sounds Lost in Translation* examines a musical score created during Korea's modernization period, a time marked by the frequent loss and transformation of tradition amid the influx of foreign cultures. The score, *Joseon Guak Yeongsan Hoesang*, was transcribed in 1914 by Insik Kim, a teacher at the Korean Court Music Study Institute, and was a transcription of the *yanggeum* (Korean dulcimer) music, referred to as Yeongsan Hoesang in Western staff notation. Annotated with Hangeul notations mimicking the sounds of the instrument instead of traditional note names, the score is also popularly known as the first Korean traditional music score transcribed into Western notation by a Korean. Musicians of that time often published their music in Western staffs to introduce Korean traditional music to the outside world or to incorporate external sensibilities into Korean music. However, there were certain sounds and techniques of Korean traditional music that could not be translated into the Western notation. Centered on interviews with traditional music performers, composers, and researchers, Kim's work reconstructs these diverse speculations, historical records, and everyday video footage to explore the sounds and emotions lost or altered in the transcription process. Through this, the artist questions today's institutionalized mainstream musical frameworks, including staff notation, and reflects on the state of traditional music today. For the 15th Gwangju Biennale, she will partially re-edit and present *A Story of Oseonbo*, which was first unveiled in 2022.



Bianca Bondi
Haciendo vaticinios en estanques astrales
2024
Courtesy of La Casa Encendida-Ph. Maru Serrano

YoungEun Kim
A Story of Oseonbo: Sounds Lost in Translation Single-channel Video, Stereo Sound, 47min 5sec
2022

Dora Budor
Passive Recreation
HD Video, Rotating Pasture Fence Electronic Devices 2024
Image courtesy of Nottingham Contemporary
Photo: Lewis Ronald

Julian Abraham "Togar"
OK Studio
Photo: Charles Benton

Marina Rosenfeld
μ (steel) 2-Channel Video

Hyoungsan Jun
Suspention of Disbelief #3; Contact
Mixed Media (Sound Installation: Motor, Speakers, Amplifiers, VLF Receivers, Loop Antenna, Light Sensors, Sound Module, Etc)
Dimensions Variable
2018

Julian Abraham "Togar"

Born in Indonesia

Julian Abraham "Togar" primarily works at the intersection of sound, music, DIY-engineering, and programming, developing his projects within the broader framework of rhythm and systems. At the 15th Gwangju Biennale, Togar will present a new audiovisual installation. This exhibition will feature various sounds ranging from experimental sound vision to recorded audio to live performance. In addition, the installation will combine automated and activated elements, with a contraption transforming analog and digital sounds by blending them together. Based on his work *OK Studio* showcased at the SculptureCenter in New York in the fall of 2023, Togar's biennale presentation will be newly configured to fit the location.

Marina Rosenfeld

Born in USA

Marina Rosenfeld will present her new work *μ* at the 15th Gwangju Biennale. *μ*, or "mu," is an installation comprising a 2-channel video and mixed media, with its title referring to a measure of tactile sensation or friction. Stemming from Rosenfeld's long-standing interest in the aesthetics and material culture of dub plate and turntablism, *μ* focuses on the microscopic phenomena occurring within the grooves of a dub plate at the moment when sound is being recorded. In this boundaryless landscape, the artist imagines the role of the turntable needle as an avatar within a quantum conditional space where sound, touch, and movement entangle. She conceptualizes the scenes in *μ* as points where the proto-social and material potentials of music overlap and clash, capturing friction at the starting point of sound playback. *μ* is a commissioned work by the Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC) at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and the Gwangju Biennale.

Hyoungsan Jun

Born in South Korea

Hyoungsan Jun is an artist who explores the "musicalization" of non-musical sounds through installations and sound performances. His work deconstructs sound to reveal its artistic potential and stimulates in-depth discussion about the role of sound in society and culture. Influenced by pitch, frequency, and socio-cultural contexts, sound provides a rich palette for exploring social dynamics. In his *Trap of Balance* series, Jun examines these dynamics through sound, traversing the boundaries between music and non-music, and combining sound and sculpture to alter the flow of time. His work aims to offer audiences sensory and spatial experiences that expand the scope of perception. The sound via this process would move and rule the space through 4 speakers spread throughout the exhibition, and would make a spectacle by adding a movement of the light and the machine. However, there is no readability of any underlying implications, properly presented for the viewer's comfort. The spectators only occupy the overwhelming space, and just waiting for the meaning to occur; the durational process that parallels their movements and experiences.

During the 15th Gwangju Biennale, visitors will have the opportunity to experience contemporary art from various countries through the 2024 Gwangju Biennale Pavilions. First introduced in 2018, the Gwangju Biennale Pavilions aim to create a network for art and cultural institutions, both domestic and international. This year, in addition to national pavilions, the Biennale will feature a diverse array of pavilions that highlight collaborations between institutions, curators, and governments. The Gwangju Pavilion will debut this year, directed by Ahn Mihee, the former Director of the Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art, who was selected through an open call. In an interview with *Monthly Art*, Ms. Ahn shared insights into the unique aspects of the Gwangju Pavilion and how it differs from the Biennale itself.

Gwangju Bienn
Pavilion

Gwangju Pavilion Exhibition Director

Mihee Ahn

Interview by **Jaeyoung Kang**

Photo by Hongsoon Park

How do you feel about being selected as the director of the Gwangju Pavilion, and what has been your mindset during the preparation process?

I feel a great sense of meaning and responsibility in being the first to take on the Gwangju Pavilion. Even after leaving, I have continued contemplating the spirit of Gwangju, and I am delighted to have the opportunity to express these thoughts through this exhibition, which I hope not only meets the expectations of Gwangju's citizens but also resonates with a broader audience.

What is the significance and role of the pavilions that operate separately from the main exhibition at the Gwangju Biennale?

The Gwangju Biennale Pavilions were first introduced in 2018. From the initial three pavilions, the number grew to nine by 2023; this year (the 15th edition), we have 31 pavilions, the largest number ever. The expansion aims to create a festive atmosphere throughout the city during the Biennale. The high demand from countries and organizations wanting to hold exhibitions during the Biennale reflects the 30-year history of the Gwangju Biennale and the elevated international status of contemporary Korean art.

What distinguishes the Gwangju Pavilion from other pavilions?

The primary difference lies in its management. The Gwangju Biennale Foundation leads the project, setting the budget and selecting the director. The exhibition spaces include three galleries at the Gwangju Museum of Art, directly connected to the main venue. These spaces are tasked with representing Gwangju's identity, showcasing its passion, culture, and creativity through contemporary art. While the main exhibition addresses central issues and concepts of contemporary art, the Gwangju Pavilion aims to reinterpret the identity and spirit of Gwangju and disseminate them globally. This exhibition embodies the aspirations of Gwangju's citizens.

It is said that you have a deep connection with the Gwangju Biennale.

I worked for twelve years at the Gwangju Biennale starting in 2005; during this period, I experienced six biennales and witnessed the evolution of global biennales firsthand. I also appreciated the importance of biennales named after a city striving to encapsulate that city's identity. I continuously ruminated on this responsibility over the years and have striven to realize this goal in this exhibition.

What aspects did you emphasize in expressing the spirit of Gwangju?

The spirit of Gwangju, rooted in the May 18 Democratic Uprising, represents important values, but I believe a future-oriented approach is necessary when practicing this spirit in contemporary times and expressing it through contemporary art. In this exhibition, I aimed to implement the spirit of Gwangju in a fresh way by utilizing the symbolism of Mudeungsan Mountain. Mudeungsan holds profound symbolic meaning for Gwangju citizens, embodying values of fairness and transcendence.

Can you elaborate on the meaning of "mudeung" or equity?

We conducted preliminary research with humanities scholars on the contemporary realization and practice of "mudeung". Gwangju citizens often consider Mudeungsan Mountain as a prominent symbol of the city. This exhibition aims to connect the spirit of mudeung with the spirit of Gwangju, demonstrating how mudeung can be achieved in a contemporary setting through the artworks. Mudeung signifies a state of having no ranks, a transcendental concept that goes beyond mere "equality." It embodies "fairness" rather than "equal treatment," and fairness is a topic currently at the forefront of discussions in Korean society. Fairness is a core tenet of democracy, tied to discussions surrounding human rights and sustainable futures. Thus, the spirit of mudeung is closely linked to the spirit of Gwangju. This spirit is already explored in contemporary art through various themes and aligns with the values of Gwangju. It encompasses not just the visible world but also the invisible, embracing all life forms. The mindset that encompasses a sustainable future, human rights, and inclusivity of all living beings is ultimately the spirit of mudeung, which is also the spirit of Gwangju.

Which artists are participating in the exhibition, and how do they express the spirit of Gwangju?

The participating artists range from those in their late twenties to established mid-career artists. Additionally, the late artist Kang-ha Lee's *Spring of Mudeungsan* will be featured as the exhibition's concluding piece. The artworks use various modes of expression to metaphorically and indirectly convey the spirit of Gwangju and mudeung.

How did you approach the younger generation in relation to the spirit of Gwangju?

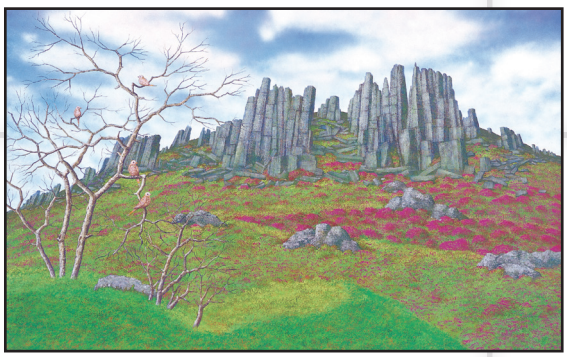
We wanted to hear from members of the generation who were born after the country's democratization and thus don't have a deeply felt personal connection to Gwangju's legacy or spirit. To achieve this, we included young artists who will showcase works that express the spirit of Gwangju from their contemporary perspective. We also documented the opinions of the younger generation through a discussion forum called "Monthly Mudeung," which is included in the archive section of the exhibition.

Can you tell us about the overall structure of the exhibition?

The exhibition begins with an integrated archive section, followed by artworks that express the spirit of mudeung in various ways. It is organized around keywords such as "Innovative Solidarity," "Creative Resistance," and "Sustainable Justice." These keywords are not separate but intersect to create a multilayered network of meanings within the space, aiming to transmit the spirit of Gwangju in the forms of various signals.

What is the message you wish to ultimately convey through this exhibition?

I hope this exhibition serves as a successful example of how the spirit of Gwangju can be practiced in a contemporary way via art. I'm also seeking to provide visitors with a deeper understanding of Gwangju's identity and spirit. I hope this exhibition becomes a space for empathy and sharing for many people.



Kang-ha Lee *Spring of Mudeungsan* Acrylic and Oil on Canvas 181.8×290.9cm 2007

Mihee Ahn

Mihee Ahn has consistently engaged with contemporary art through her extensive curatorial projects focusing on the intersection of global collaboration and innovative artistic practices. Starting her career as an independent curator in New York, she organized numerous exhibitions. From 2005 to 2017, Ahn was the exhibition team leader and policy planning team leader at the Gwangju Biennale, overseeing the execution of four editions. Her work also included organizing global projects along with conducting research on long-term development plans and building domestic and international networks.

Notable Pavilions

The pavilion project, which began in 2018 with just three national pavilions, has rapidly expanded over three editions to include 31 pavilions created by various countries and institutions in 2024.

1 Gwangju

Equity: Peaceful Strain

Venue Gwangju Museum of Art Gallery 3, 4, 6
Curator Mihee Ahn
Artists Yoonju Kim Shin, Woonghyun Kim, Hyun Na, Pilyong Song, Heejung Ahn, Jieun Yang, Jongtae Oh, Joonyoung Yoon, Kang-ha Lee, Sehyun Lee, Soobum Lim, Jongwan Jang, Hanna Jang, Hyeonjun Jeong, Jungtae Jo, Jongwoon Choi, Seungwan Ha, Yang Ah Ham

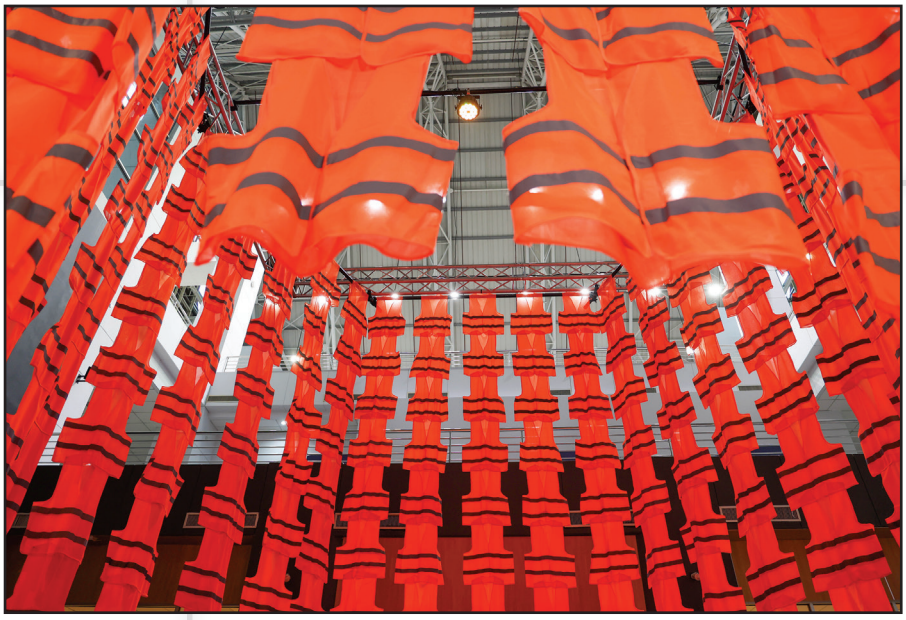
The Gwangju Pavilion project starts from the recognition that the concept of "mudeung" (transcendent equity) is a key concept representing the locality and history of Gwangju. The exhibition seeks concrete ways to carry this meaning into contemporary significance.

2 Malaysia

Passing Patterns: Exploring Temporary Markings in Urban Spaces

Venue Asia Culture Center Creation Space 5
Curators Erry Arham Azmi, Syahrul Niza Bin Ahmad Zaini
Artists Mohamad Zulkefli Bin Mohd Jais
Organization National Visual Art Gallery Malaysia

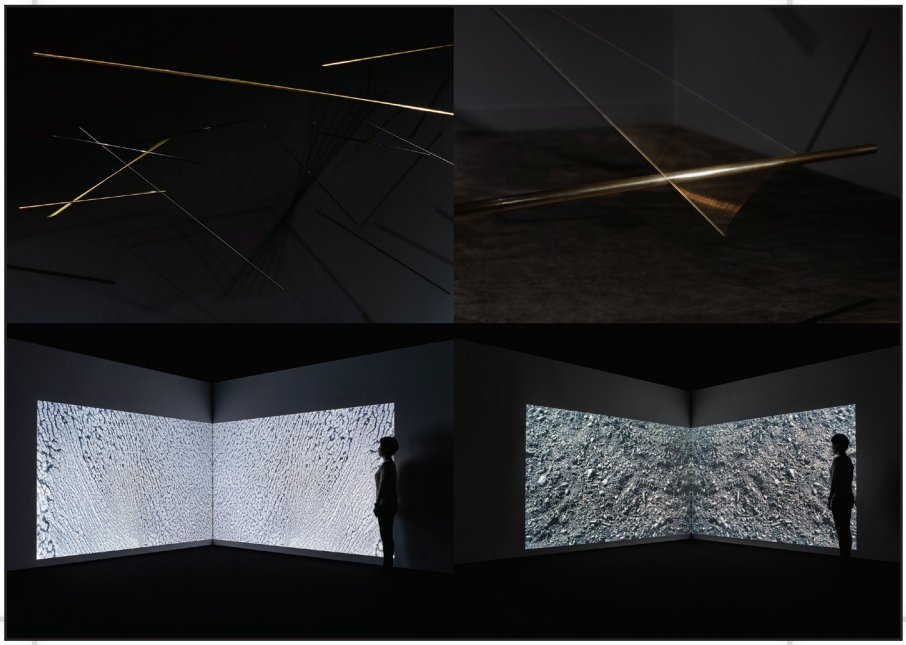
All places generate historical meaning through temporary markings. This is well illustrated in the works of Mohamad Zulkefli Jais, who won the Young Contemporary Art Competition at the National Art Gallery of Malaysia in 2023. The installation at the National Asian Culture Center showcases the artist's subtle approach to strategically placing temporary markings (artworks and content) within contemporary urban spaces.



We (Still) Have Things to Remember

Venue Gallery of LAAM, Gallery Hyeyum
Curator Hiroki Yamamoto
Artists Akiko Utsumi, Terue Yamauchi
Organization Fukuoka, Fukuoka Art Nex

The Japan Pavilion presents an exhibition curated by Hiroki Yamamoto at two locations in the city of Gwangju. Titled *We (Still) Have Things to Remember* and inspired by Raegun Park's book of the same name, the exhibition features new works by Akiko Utsumi and Terue Yamauchi, artists based in Fukuoka who work both domestically and internationally. Their works address the intertwined history of war and colonialism in East Asia, exploring themes of remembrance and oblivion.



3 Japan

4 Argentina

In the Order of the Stones

Venue 5·18 Archives
Curator Sofia Dourron
Artists Florencia Levy

Florencia Levy's latest work, *Hundreds of Millions of Years for These Forms*, is a 13-channel video installation reminiscent of the chorus in Greek tragedy. Confronting the audience with a play set in the contemporary world, the chorus, symbolizing the material and cultural unsustainability of the current system, sings about the present order, manganese nodules extracted from the ocean floor, and microplastics quietly infiltrating our bodies. The installation also addresses the colonial history and ecological trauma embedded in the mining systems that still drive the world today.

5 Canada

Home and Other Places

Venue Yangnim Gallery
Curators William Huffman, Sun Lee
Artists Saimaiyu Akesuk, Shuvinai Ashoona, Qavavau Manumie, Pitseolak Qimirpik, Quvianaqtuk Pudlat, Ooloosie Saila, Seol-ah Kim, Se-woong Ju, Jo-heum Lee
Organization West Baffin Cooperative

The Canada Pavilion's exhibition showcases the documented relationships built between Korean artists based in Gwangju and six Inuit artists from Canada's Arctic regions as part of a unique collaborative activity.

6 Italy

Ministries of Loneliness

Venue Dong-gok Art Museum
Curator Soik Jung
Artists Rebecca Moccia
Organization Italian Cultural Institute in Korea

To commemorate the 140th anniversary of Korea-Italy diplomatic relations, the Italian Cultural Institute in Korea has invited Soik Jung, who served as Artistic Director of the Korean Pavilion at the 18th Venice Biennale International Architecture Exhibition in 2023, to curate this exhibition. Titled *Ministries of Loneliness*, this exhibition features Rebecca Moccia's ongoing site-specific and culture-specific project that began in 2021. Moccia has explored the socio-structural, political, and emotional aspects of loneliness in Italy, the UK, the USA, and Japan; now, through the 15th Gwangju Biennale, Moccia examines and artistically reinterprets loneliness experienced by Koreans.

7 Africa

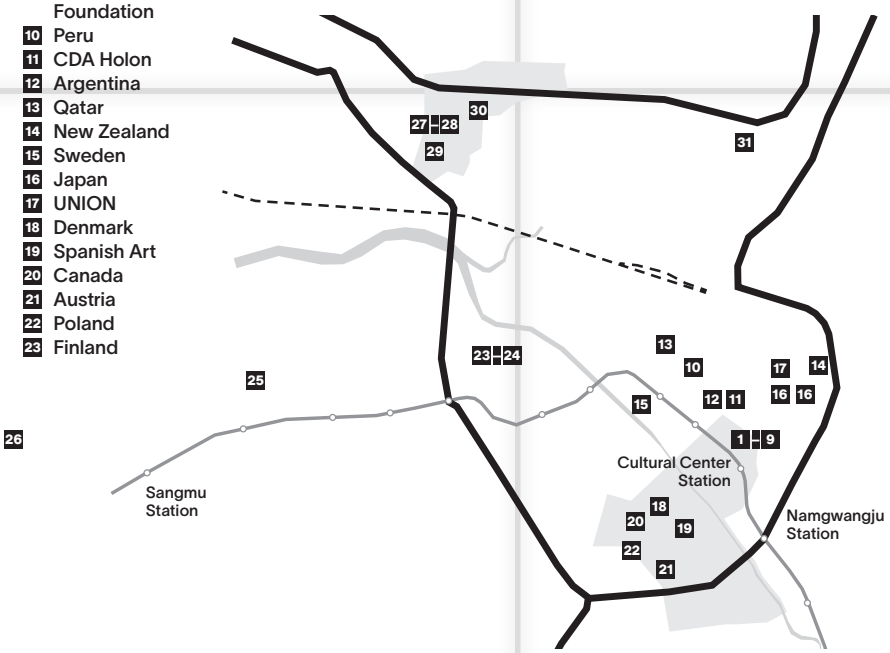
Dreamscape

Venue Gwangju Arts Center Annex Building
Curator Igo Diarra
Artists Amadou Sanogo and 25 artists

The Africa Pavilion presents *Dreamscape*, offering a multilayered and non-linear perspective on African subjectivity, physical space, and dream-like environments.

Location of Main Pavilion

1 Malaysia
2 Myanmar
3 The Phillippines
4 Singapore
5 Thailand
6 Vietnam
7 ASEAN
8 Indonesia
9 Korea Foundation—Gwangju Biennale Foundation
10 Peru
11 CDA Holon
12 Argentina
13 Qatar
14 New Zealand
15 Sweden
16 Japan
17 UNION
18 Denmark
19 Spanish Art
20 Canada
21 Austria
22 Poland
23 Finland
24 British Council—Korea Foundation
25 American
26 Italy
27 The Netherlands
28 Gwangju
29 Africa
30 Germany
31 China



Public Program

Symposium
As part of the opening week program, the symposium, in collaboration with the Gwangju Biennale Foundation and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, provides a platform for participating artists, scholars, and curators to discuss dynamic perspectives on contemporary sound and technology, as well as artistic practices.

Title New Radars: The Map and the Territory
Period September 8 (Sun)
Venue Asian Culture Center, Archive & Research, Theater 3
Collaboration Solomon. R. Guggenheim Museum

GB Talks
Striving for interdisciplinary dialogue and engagement, the 15th Gwangju Biennale offers programs that enable visitors to interact with experts in various fields.

Date & Time Once a month during the exhibition period
Venue Gwangju Biennale Geosigi Hall
Participants All visitors

For Children
The 15th Gwangju Biennale has organized hands-on programs to facilitate children's enjoyment of and engagement with the exhibitions.

❶ GB My Pan, Sori
Date & Time Starting from September 14, Every other Saturday, 10AM, during the exhibition period
Venue Gwangju Biennale Geosigi Hall
Participants Children visitors (approximately 15–20 people per session)
Description Exhibition visit and experience-based activities

❷ GB Little Forest
Date & Time Starting from September 14, Every other Saturday, 2PM, during the exhibition period
Venue Gwangju Biennale Geosigi Hall
Participants Children visitors (approximately 15–20 people per session)
Description Exhibition visit and experience-based activities

Biennale with *Monthly Art*

Soyoung Chung

Monthly Art, October 1995

Beyong the Borders

September 20 – November 20, 1995

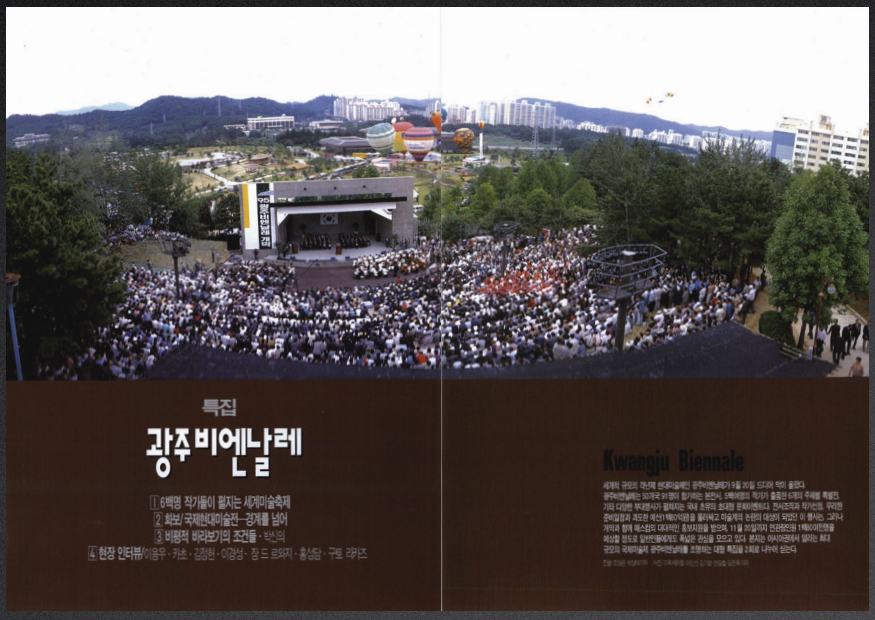
The inaugural Gwangju Biennale in 1995, titled *Beyond the Borders*, was a collaborative effort that involved seven co-curators and ten special exhibition curators, led by organizing committee chair Youngbang Lim, rather than a single artistic director.

For the main exhibition, commissioners from different continents selected the participating artists. The Asian section was curated by the prominent critic Kwang-su Oh, then president of the Korean Art Critics Association. Although the artists varied in age, those in their 30s to early 40s predominated, recognized for their experimental approaches and creative energy.

Held across various locations in Gwangju, the special exhibitions were categorized into site-specific shows and field-specific ones. Among these, the InfoArt exhibition—curated by Nam June Paik, the world's first video artist, alongside curators Cynthia Goodman and Honghee Kim —explored the role of art in the information society.

At the time, art critic Shineui Park pointed out that the Gwangju Biennale, due to its late start relative to Western counterparts, must overcome the non-populist nature of existing biennales.

Park also suggested a future strategy: South Korean planners should focus on highlighting Asian art rather than that of all continents, drawing inspiration from other Third World biennales in Havana and São Paulo.



The Gwangju Biennale finally opened on September 20, 1995, the scale of which was worthy of a global event. With extensive media coverage supporting its launch, the Biennale drew widespread interest from the public, with a total attendance approximating 1.8 million visitors prior to closing on November 20. *Monthly Art* featured an extensive two-part special on this, the largest-ever international art festival in Asia.

A critical essay on the Gwangju Biennale by art critic Shineui Park, published in the October 1995 issue of *Monthly Art*. The artworks featured are *Handicapped Human Being* by Sung Keum Ahn (Top installation, 1995) and *Driving Up to the Limits* by Myeong-hye Kim (Bottom left installation, 1995).

With a 48-year history, *Monthly Art* has chronicled the evolution of major art events in Korea, from the inception of Asia's first biennale in Gwangju to the integration and growth of the Busan Biennale. In this special English edition, we reflect on the history of past biennales and revisit some of the most significant articles *Monthly Art* has covered over the years. What changes and developments can we observe in the biennales as we look back from the perspective of 2024?

The most notable aspect of the 2008 Gwangju Biennale was that it had no fixed theme.

(Top) Glenn Ligon, *Negro Sunshine* 2008
The artist illuminated the phrase "Negro Sunshine" in neon, painted black, to question gender and racial classifications.
(Bottom left) Redza Piyadasa, *A Matter of Time* 1977
The Malaysian artist created works that raised fundamental questions about national identity and modern art in Malaysia.

Monthly Art, October 2008

Annual Report

September 5 – November 9, 2008

The 7th Gwangju Biennale marked a significant shift by appointing Okwui Enwezor, a globally renowned curator and the first non-Korean director, at a time when East Asian biennales preferred domestic directors. True to its title, *Annual Report*, the event garnered attention for its bold approach of selecting notable exhibitions held around the world during the 18-month preparation period.

Okwui Enwezor remarked at the press opening that the absence of a specific theme was, in itself, the theme; according to him, the collecting of works in Gwangju created a new narrative, ultimately allowing the audience to construct the theme.

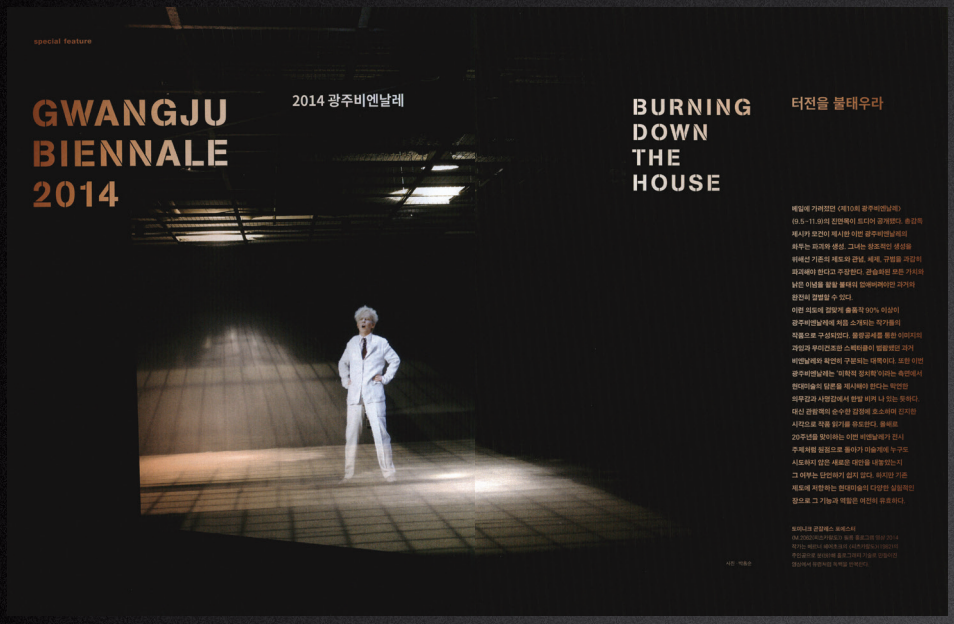
Professor Taeman Choi of Kookmin University noted in his writings that Enwezor's statement reminded us that ideology was no longer the central focus of biennales. He further evaluated that, instead of simply juxtaposing works from around the world that dealt with issues like art, politics, region, and race in Gwangju—the historic site of the May 18 Democratic Uprising—the exhibition interconnected the issues emanating from each work, transforming the exhibition into both a visual report and a platform for discourse.

Burning Down The House

September 5 – November 9, 2014

The 10th Gwangju Biennale in 2014, which marked the 20th anniversary of the Biennale, was directed by Jessica Morgan, a curator from the Tate Modern of the UK. Titled *Burning Down the House*, the event was a conscious response to the previous biennales that had often been criticized for their emphasis on spectacle and sheer volume; as a result, 90% of the works presented were unveiled for the first time ever at the Gwangju Biennale. The title *Burning Down the House* is borrowed from the 1980s song by the American band Talking Heads, a track that reflects the anxieties of the American middle class.

Independent curator Enna Bae noted that the biennale was saturated with images of destruction and renewal, resistance and breakthrough, loss and recovery—all of which were metaphorically incinerated, echoing the phrase "Burning Down the House." While the biennale received praise for burning down rigid thinking and stereotypical perspectives and reigniting the spirit of resistance that had faded away into history, the exhibition was also criticized for implementing the theme in a somewhat one-dimensional way.



Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster *M.2062 (Fitzcarraldo)* Film hologram 2014
In this piece, created using split holography technology, the protagonist from Werner Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo* (1982) eerily repeats a monologue like a ghost.

An essay by independent curator Enna Bae in the October 2014 issue of *Monthly Art* The artwork shown is *Seven Sliding Doors* (2003) by Carsten Höller.
This piece features sliding doors with mirrors on both sides, creating an endless corridor that continuously reflects the viewers as they walk through the exhibition.

The theme of the 2021 Gwangju Biennale was Soft and Weak like Water, aiming to create a platform where the stories of artists traversing regional and institutional boundaries would pool and flow from a "planetary perspective."

Monthly Art, May 2023

Soft and Weak like Water

April 7– July 9, 2023

With the preceding 13th edition having been delayed for a year due to the pandemic, the 14th Gwangju Biennale took place just one year after the endemic phase started. The theme of the event focused on water as a metaphor, seeking to explore the power and potential of art to bring about true change and recovery, as well as solidarity, despite being regarded as the weakest element.

Directed by SookKyung Lee, the first Asian curator at Tate Modern, this edition presented a thematic contrast to the 2014 Biennale, which was directed by Jessica Morgan and centered around the concept of fire. Art critic Hyeonju Yu noted that this Biennale focused on "relationships for coexistence" by considering the issues of politics and the Gwangju region and broadening the perspective to include non-human entities.

Among the nine national pavilions that accompanied the main exhibition, the Italian and Dutch pavilions gained particular attention for their exhibitions addressing ecological issues, aligning with the overarching theme of the Biennale.

In addition to the main exhibition, the biennale featured nine national pavilions, all of them showcasing works that highlighted the unique characteristics of their countries.

Tourism Spots in Gwangju

There is a phrase often used to describe Gwangju: "The birthplace of flavor." This recognition is well-deserved, as Gwangju is a city acknowledged by people across the nation for its culinary excellence. While almost any spot in Gwangju guarantees a delightful culinary experience, there are many places that capture the local essence with a refined sensibility. Here, we introduce four such establishments that not only offer superb flavors but also showcase unique character and beauty, delivering a rich variety of tastes.

Dokyung Ha

GWANGJU

1 Sansu Ssambap 산수쌈밥

10:30 AM–8:30 PM／Closed on Sundays

11, Donggye-ro, Dong-gu, Gwangju

This restaurant, highly recommended by locals, specializes in traditional Korean set meals. "Ssambap" refers to a dish where you wrap rice and various ingredients you choose with *ssamjang* (seasoned paste) in green vegetable leaves and eat. If you want to experience the essence of local cuisine while ensuring good value for money, this is the place to visit. The signature dish, "Wureong Ssambap Jeongsik" (snail ssambap set meal) includes boiled pork slices, river snail, traditional doenjang stew with greens and a variety of side dishes. The incredibly big meal provides a feast that captures the warm hospitality and abundant taste of Korean countryside.

2 Mudeungsan Brewery 무등산 브루어리

5:00 PM–2:00 AM / Closed on Mondays
27, Sicheong-ro, Seo-gu, Gwangju

Located in a renovated, Western-style house built in 1963, Mudeungsan Brewery is the only craft beer brewery in Gwangju. Using local specialties, brewers produce unique craft beers that embody the essence of Gwangju in every bottle. If you visit, try the "Wome IPA" (pronounced "Wo-meh"), which includes watermelons from Mudeungsan, once historically presented to kings and renowned for their large size and sweetness. This IPA also features hibiscus petals, blending the sweetness of watermelon with the tartness of hibiscus for a balanced flavor.

3 Goyoyu 고요유

12:30 PM–8:00 PM /
Weekends 3:00 PM–7:00 PM
26, Daenam-daero 223beon-gil, Nam-gu, Gwangju

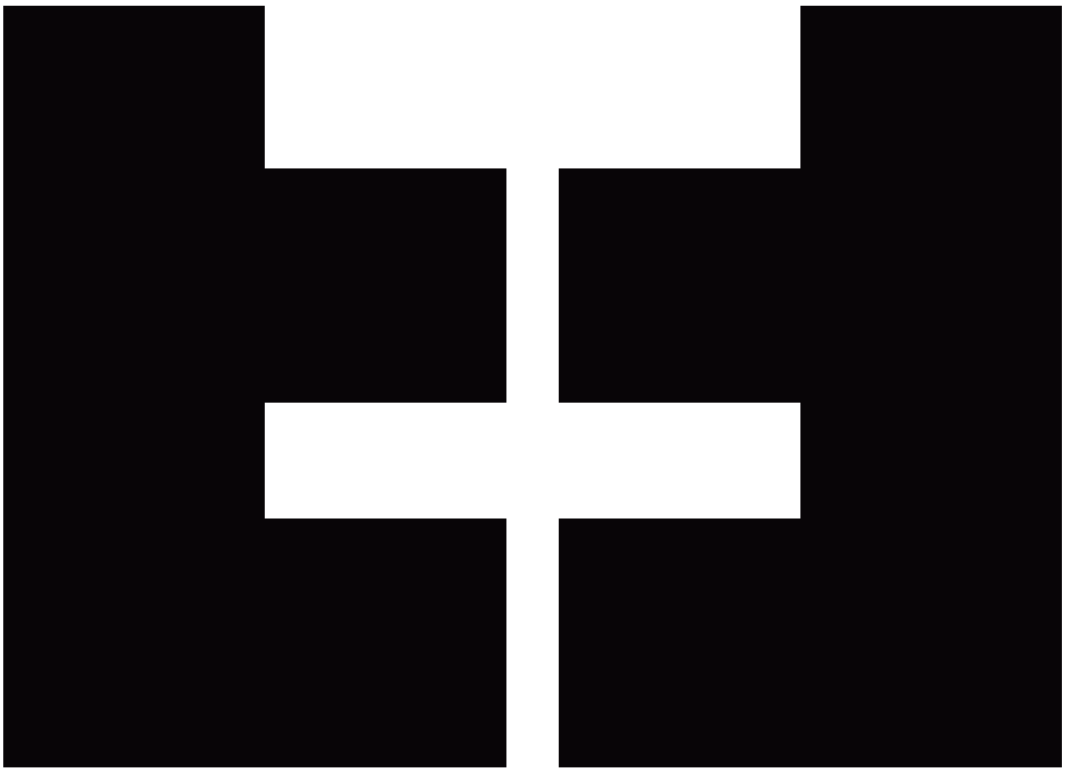
This teahouse, with its large windows showcasing serene natural scenery, is recommended for those seeking a quiet retreat into their own peaceful thoughts. The teahouse can be enjoyed in two ways: "Tea Course" and "Walk-In." Reservations for the Tea Course must be made two days in advance. The 1 hour and 20 minute session includes three types of tea and three traditional accompanying snacks, with the menu changing seasonally. Goyoyu presents six kinds of teas, from white tea to black tea in its own unique blending. Additionally, the teahouse collaborates with local Gwangju artists to create new tea ware designs, adding to the visual enjoyment. For a more casual teatime, walk-ins are also recommended.

4 Passe Arr 파세아르

12:00 PM–9:00 PM
77, Jejung-ro, Nam-gu, Gwangju (Honam Theological University & Seminary)

Located across the national heritage "Uilseon Missionary House," a mansion built in the 1920s, and situated on the ground floor of the library building of Honam Theological University, this café offers both a timeless view and a unique setting. The summer menu features a refreshing Tomato Honey Sorbet, combining fresh tomatoes, fragrant mint, and honey to offer a cool respite from the exhausting seasonal heat. Additionally, the seasonal mango cake revitalizes those who have lost their appetite in the simmering weather. While the menu changes seasonally, the steady seller here is the satisfying and affordable financier, available in various flavors like plain, fig almond, salted caramel, and salted chocolate.

About Busa



Located at the southern tip of South Korea, Busan is a bustling port city and the country's second-largest metropolitan area after the capital, Seoul. During the Korean War in 1950, Busan served as a temporary capital, when the government was forced to flee the advancing North Korean forces. The origins of the Busan Biennale can be traced back to events such as the Busan Youth Biennale, which began in 1981, predating Gwangju Biennale, Sea Art Festival, and Busan International Outdoor Sculpture Symposium. Since officially adopting the name "Busan Biennale" in 2002, this art festival has established itself as a leading event in both Korean and Asian art scenes. The 2024 Busan Biennale is co-directed by Vera Mey and Philippe Pirotte, both of whom were selected through an international competition. The two directors chose the key concept of this year's edition of the Biennale—titled *Seeing in the Dark*—by drawing

an Biennale

connections to the ideas of pirate utopias and Buddhist sanctuaries, and by receiving inspiration from the refugee experience during the Korean War, the geographical blend of mountains and sea, and the coastal city's unique sense of freedom. These difference facets of the Korean Peninsula altogether represent the core themes of this year's biennale.

In this feature, *Monthly Art* highlights interviews with the two directors, profiles two prominent Korean female artists, and introduces six other noteworthy artists participating in the biennale.

Alongside exhibition details, we also offer recommendations for hidden gems of eateries and tourist spots around the city, inviting readers to fully immerse themselves in the vibrant atmosphere of Busan. (*Note: Busan's official Romanization was changed from "Pusan" to "Busan" in 2001.)

2024 Busan Biennale: *Seeing in the Dark* 2024.8.17–10.20

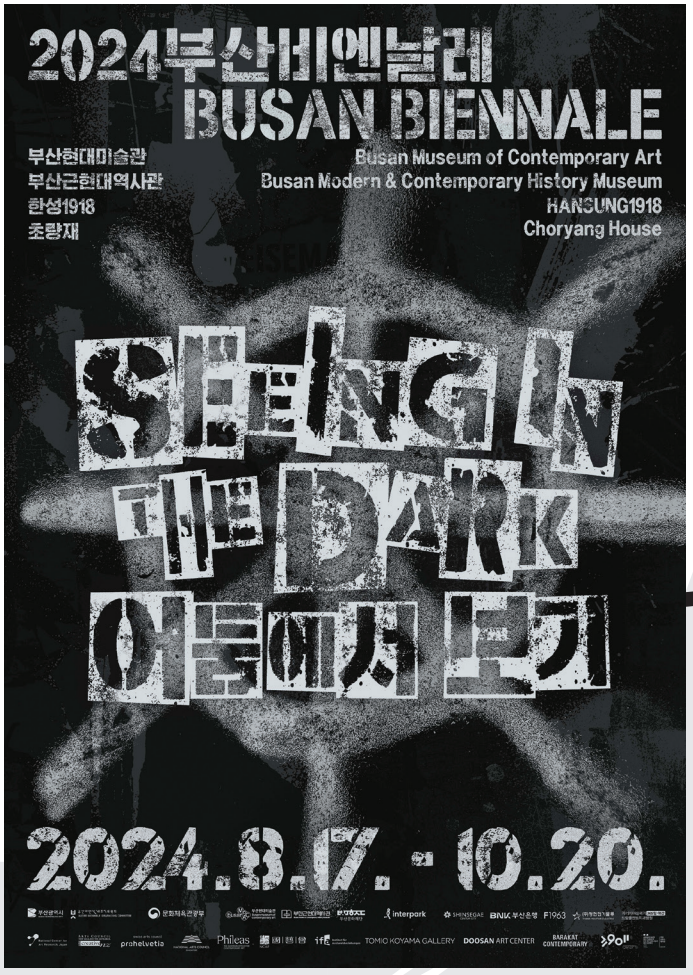
What might it mean to see in the dark? This predicament describes our present condition navigating ground that is at once known and unknowable, hazardous yet fertile for new imaginings. We are kept in the dark from the reality of our political moment, with the mechanics of the world constantly positioned as out of sight. Conventionally, the European Enlightenment is thought of in relation to 'light' and the belief that knowledge appears only with visibility. Instead of admonishing darkness, we see these depths as an alternative to the light, one that embraces instead of reveals.

The 2024 edition of the Busan Biennale, titled *Seeing in the Dark*, occupies the mental space between notions of 'Pirate Enlightenment' on the one hand and 'Buddhist Enlightenment' on the other. We consider these spaces as offering an alternative to the demands for transparency by the surveillance-industrial complex. We liken artistic activity to the fugitive strategy of deception as a way to invoke what theorists Fred Moten and Stefano Harney call 'fugitive enlightenment.' We see tactics of operating surreptitiously as part of 'another tradition of cultural experiment, and of perversion.'

We draw upon the idea of 'pirate utopias' as early forms of autonomous societies, operating beyond the reach of governments and corporations, embracing a multicultural, spiritually tolerant, sexually free, and occasionally purely egalitarian society. Decisions were made by negotiation and assembly in a council which consisted of the ablest pirates without distinction of culture or color. According to anthropologist David Graeber (a key figure in our thinking), these experiments served as the template for the best aspects of the Enlightenment movement in Europe.

Positioned as a compliment to these ideas is the Buddhist monastic way emphasizing humility in a community set apart from secular life. Through regular gatherings, decisions regarding monastic rules and the dispositions of communal property are made. The figure of the Buddha —'always already an empty signifier,' an 'identity evacuated of identity' as a homeless, a diasporic, or a wandering and advanced globalized condition— points to a 'self without place,' a self we interpret as akin to the migrant, the refugee, the proletarian rebel, the drop-out, or the pirate.

The title of the biennale, *Seeing in the Dark*, signifies enlightenment's potential to become active and contingent, an agency in the here and now. Darkness is a component of both pirate enlightenment (existing outside the state's purview many pirates and their histories remain shrouded in darkness) as well as Buddhist



2024 Busan Biennale Curatorial Team

Artistic Directors
Vera Mey & Philippe Pirotte
Co-Curator
Suzy Park

Major Exhibition Venues
The Busan Biennale will be held in four locations in Busan, including the main exhibition hall.

Tuesdays-Sundays 10:00–18:00

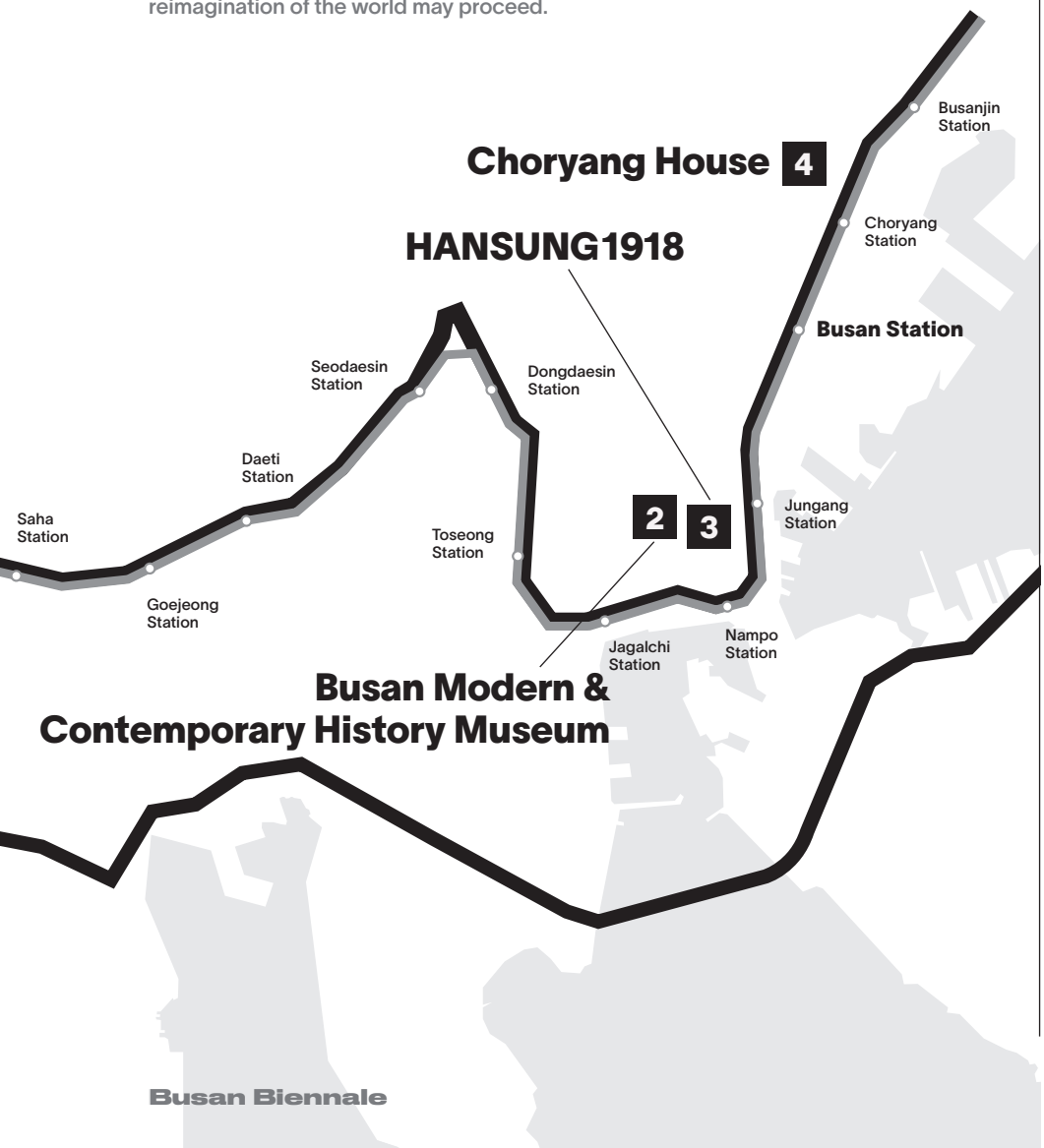
1 **(main) Busan Museum of Contemporary Art**
1191, Nakdongnam-ro, Saha-gu, Busan
2 **Busan Modern & Contemporary History Museum**
112, Daecheong-ro, Jung-gu, Busan
3 **HANSUNG1918**
13, Baeksan-gil, Jung-gu, Busan
4 **Choryang House**
117-8, Choryangsang-ro, Dong-gu, Busan

enlightenment in finding a path towards the end of suffering. Both traditions still retain rich visual histories, many of which playfully engage with ideas of narrative.

Seeing in the Dark is a visual paradox. It can refer to the metaphorical darkness many people are forced to function in, threatened by the technological appropriation of the wonderful gift of night-vision from the animal world for purposes of surveillance. Darkness is a space of emancipation and awakens a degree of 'primal' awareness. Instead of consumers in control, we have to mobilize other senses next to vision and the regimes of the visible in order to orient ourselves.

Both the Pirate utopias and the (Buddhist) monastery indicate spaces of, or aimed at, liberation—spaces of consciousness, from which a reimagination of the world may proceed.

In this respect, we consider the pirate ship and the Buddhist monastery as two symbolic images which buttress our conceptual framework for the Busan Biennale 2024. We consider this reimagination crucial in the gloomy times we live in, and one which will guide our social and aesthetic approach to the Busan Biennale. The conversations between both points of influence, pirate enlightenment and Buddhist enlightenment, don't necessarily aim at a consensus; instead, they create a form of 'critical festivity' at those points of engagement where the ideologies diverge, or even prove irreconcilable, but without demanding violent negation.



Public Program

The Public Program offers opportunities for direct interaction between visitors and artists through various performances, workshops, and artist talks by the participating artists of the Busan Biennale 2024. This program forms a discourse combined with the theme and concept of the exhibition, expanding artistic experiences and presenting new perspectives.

Performance

Blackout Journey
Date & Time August 15 (Thu)–October 20 (Sun) 1PM–5PM (approximately 60 sessions during the period)
Venue 2F, Busan Museum of Contemporary Art

Hyunsook HongLee has been designing numerous audience-participatory performances that aim to activate non-visual senses, such as touch, smell, and hearing, thereby moving away from human-centeredness towards non-human sensations. Concomitant with this year's metaphorical theme Seeing in the Dark, the audience-participatory performance *Blackout Journey* liberates and transforms the senses. By stepping into a specially created dark space, workshop participants will completely step away from the world of bright rationality reliant on sight and begin perceiving another world through other senses, forming temporary connections with unfamiliar others.

Dialogue 2

Buddhist Art: Reality and Illusion
Panel Cheon Song, Eunjung Cho
Date September 21 (Sat)
Venue 1F Taring Padi's Podium, Busan Museum of Contemporary Art

This lecture explores the relationship between reality and illusion. In Buddhism, the world is seen as an illusion called 'Maya,' suggesting that our senses and perceptions distort actual reality. This concept is also expressed in Buddhist art, demonstrating that visual images are not just physical objects but carry deep philosophical meanings. This session will explore the relationship between reality and illusion through Buddhist art, discussing how visual expressions encapsulate Buddhist philosophy.

Artist Talk

Panel Stefano Harney with Zun Lee
Date & Time Semtember 8 (Sun) 10AM–12PM
Venue HANSUNG1918 Cheongja Hall & Online

Artistic Director

VERA M PHILIPPE PIRO

PIROTTE & MEY

This is the first time in Busan Biennale's history that two people have been selected as co-artistic directors. While only one artistic director led previous editions, the Busan Biennale with this year's selection is excited to take on this new challenge and work with Pirotte and Mey in realizing a combined vision that embodies the biennale's values. The proposal submitted by the two co-artistic directors aligns with the committee's efforts to expand representation of the biennale's core values of spontaneity, youth,

and experimentation, and to achieve and amplify exhibition values rooted in regional character. The proposed concept adopts specific cultural and spiritual ways of living in the world as an exhibition motif, while also reflecting definitive features of Busan. Additionally, the proposed concept considers the use of everyday spaces in the city and different forms of partnership with local alternative spaces, social activists, culture and art groups, and institutions.

The Busan Biennale this year involved an open call for curators. Philippe, I understand that you have previously advised the Busan Biennale. What motivated you (as a team) to organize the 2024 Busan Biennale?

VERA MEY I think biennials have become formats that benefit from collaboration! Philippe and I have worked together before on our research interests surrounding the artistic and political intersections between cultural and independence era movements across Asia and Africa.

PHILIPPE PIROTTE Yes, it is all about extending beyond the prevalent idea of the curator working alone. Test ideas on audiences and include many people from different backgrounds. I was indeed involved in the last Busan Biennale as an advisor to Haeju Kim's edition, and this was an experience which inspired me to do something in Busan again, as the city is extremely fascinating with its harbor and migration history. Luckily, the organizers were interested in the project we proposed.

Your exhibition title is *Seeing in the Dark*. With respect to this theme, how and why did David Graeber (1961-2020) emerge a major influence? Can you offer any additional insights regarding your initial approach to the exhibition? Did your planning of the biennale take into consideration the city of Busan and its history?

VM We were very inspired by a book of his published posthumously in 2023 called *Pirate Enlightenment or the Real Libertalia*, which is basically a revision of the idea that the Enlightenment was a phenomenon developed in the West and spread outward. Instead, he cites the pivotal experimentation that happened in pirate colonies, sometimes referred to as pirate utopias, where public assembly, elected leadership, and fair allocation of resources—tenets we now understand as foundational to idea of freedom and democracy—were developed. Madagascar, in particular, served as an important harbor for trade and, indeed, these special pirate communities.

PP Graeber's radical work around the impact of neoliberal forms of labor on workers has also been pivotal to our thinking. His treatise 'Bullshit jobs' is of course a stunning indictment of the world of work in late capitalism, which the biennial format and broader art world is not immune to. His optimistic thinking and research into histories of the world which are communalist also pave a way for us to think further about the role of art and aesthetics, which are under threat of becoming totally incorporated in an economy of luxury products.

Can you explain the concept of *Seeing in the Dark?* Why is darkness significant in your work?

VM It's a version of thinking about the idea of Enlightenment, not through emphasizing clarity, but by existing freely on society's periphery There is such a demand for transparency, one we regard as comparable to exposure by surveillance, which, of course, we're critical of. It's also a way to think through alternative enlightenment movements, beyond this demand that clarity and light accompany knowledge.

There are other ways to know and be in the world without exposing everything to light.

PP The idea of seeing in the dark is also a visual paradox. You can't actually see in the dark. **We take this as a metaphor for those who have been intentionally kept in the dark—out of sight.** We think about other senses that can navigate without light. And, of course, we also think about the capacity for night vision in the animal world, which has sadly been appropriated by surveillance technologies.

According to the press release, the exhibition concept seems to oscillate between "pirate utopia" and a Buddhist "monastery." Can you elaborate on these concepts? Specifically, what is "pirate utopia," and why does the "monastery" play a significant role?

VM These represent two different ends of a representational system. The pirate ship was important as a way of navigating not only the seas but the world. Histories of pirates and piracy focus on criminality. We're also aware that often pirate ships were historically made up of people that were marginalized—freed slaves, politically and socially exiled people, and workers, to name a few. These communities had to negotiate many different languages and structures of leadership to work together at sea, which was often seen as a risky and hazardous undertaking. The pirate ship, in this sense, offers us a way to understand aesthetics as a space of negotiation. Also of interest are the pirates' efforts to remain off the grid by practicing, in our view, aesthetic strategies as modes of deceit; this includes promulgating images of themselves as particularly ferocious, which may have actually been a defense mechanism.

PP Intimately connected to Korean art history, the monastery is an important site for exploring Buddhist ideas, many of which relate to the concept of the 'non-self' and the divide between illusion and reality. Apart from considering the processes of enlightenment from a Buddhist perspective, we also thought about Buddhist modes of depicting other worlds.

How does *Seeing in the Dark* operate within these two concepts, and, more importantly, connect to the participating artists? Please address the artists chosen for this exhibition.

VM Of course there are some explicit references to our

conceptual framework, such as artists who engage with maritime histories and others who engage with Buddhist philosophical frameworks. We're also interested in some artistic experiences that can be felt but not necessarily seen. There are also a number of artists who make sound and music work, for example.

PP We selected artworks that conceal as much as they reveal (invoking the "right to opacity," per Edouard Glissant), actively performing the paradoxical activity of the title. This, instead of illuminating everything in accordance with the demand for transparency, or, worse, as part of a strategy, —one implemented either to expose oneself or a work— for the mere purpose of consumption. A lot of the works we selected embody ambiguity, being identified as artworks transgressing to other domains, such as journalism, activism, community work... They don't reveal their significance at first sight, but hint at spaces of consciousness outside of the mental frames of normative social structure, from which a reimagination of the world may proceed.

You aimed for the works to be "driven in autonomous and unexpected ways without a centralized hierarchy." Could you elaborate on how these perspectives interact within the exhibition, specifically concerning the artworks and the audience? What does "without a centralized hierarchy" entail?

VM We believe in and are hopeful about the autonomy of art.

PP We wonder: How much we can re-appropriate our representation as artists and cultural thinkers, subjected as we are to the status of content providers locked in a cultural industry? Can we stage an exhibition as a dispositive which invokes, even temporarily, a place in which we can engage with a long-time cumulative history of art, as a zone of freethinking and of a speculative, rather than a tactical, imagination? Can we create a place divorced from direct return (on investment) and output-control, one that hosts a palaver uninterested in consensus directed from the position of the omnipotent curator, but instead concerned with engagement twixt ideologies that can be divergent, even irreconcilable, without demanding violent negation? Can we create a form of "critical festivity"?

When preparing for this exhibition, did you review previous editions curated by other individuals?

VM Exhibition histories, as well as previous editions, informed our current thinking. We wanted to present a framework that departed from ideas explored before but also built on what the previous curators had done before us.

PP Yes, of course. I was closely following up the wonderful biennale Haeju Kim put together in 2022. And I was aware of the edition Jacob Fabricius curated during covid, as many artists I'm familiar with participated then.

Curating biennale exhibitions while not residing in Busan must present unique challenges. How did you research and understand the local context for your exhibition?

VM We are very fortunate to have enlisted in our team an Associate Curator, Suzy Park, who is brilliant and spent her formative years in Busan. We, of course, spent our early research trips trying to understand the city by meeting many artists and thinkers familiar with Busan.

PP Our framework is partly inspired by a monastery close to Busan renowned for a story called the "Nirvana Fish" about a well that never dries. We also visited a famous monastery a bit further away, Tongdosa, and collaborated with a monk from there. In addition, we drew from the context of Busan as a maritime city and all the characteristics that come with this geographical condition. Together, the port town and the Temple in the Mountain, engender mental space for conversations and projects, for thinking about social, philosophical and artistic experiments that have criss-crossed the world.

Regarding the exhibition venues—Museum of Contemporary Art Busan, and Choryang House—how did you decide to utilize these spaces and integrate their histories into your theme of *Seeing in the Dark*? What were the key curatorial perspectives for each space? Were there any challenges in negotiating with these venues? Could you also discuss the artists' works featured at each venue for viewers interested in learning more about your shows?

VM Of course, we wanted the biennale to interact with the fascinating city of Busan, so a number of our venues are near the city center. We were fascinated by Choryang area, which is a very diverse downtown area and known for being a space for lots of migrants and temporary visitors to Busan. Choryang House itself was built in the1960s reflecting the era's vernacular architectural style. The Busan Museum of History is the site of a former bank in Busan (one of the first I believe) and we are using the basement floor where the vaults were kept, some of these elements remaining still intact. It's very symbolically loaded.

PP Busan MoCA retains a certain continuity in hosting previous editions of the biennale. Hansung 1918 is our convivial space where various sound, video and performances will take place. We're also fortunate to use the Panstar Cruise, a cruise ship between Busan and Osaka!

Interview by **Yeon Shim Chung**
Hogik University Professor
for Art Theory. Co-curated the
2018 Gwangju Biennale

Vera Mey
Vera Mey is completing a doctoral program in the History of Art and Archaeology at SOAS University of London in the UK, while working as a curator both independently and for Te Tuhi, a municipal public gallery in Auckland, New Zealand. Between 2014 and 2016, she was a curator at the NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore and has also worked independently curating exhibitions in Phnom Penh, Paris, and Bangkok. In 2017, she was part of the curatorial team for SUNSHOWER: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now, which was held at Mori Art Museum and National Art Center Tokyo coinciding with the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of ASEAN.

Philippe Pirotte
Hailing from Belgium, Pirotte is an art history professor at the Städelschule school of art in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, who also works as an associate curator with the Gropius-Bau in Berlin and as adjunct senior curator at the University of California Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley. He has been involved in various activities in both the East and West, serving as curator of the 2016 Biennale de Montréal in Canada and co-curator of Jakarta Biennale 2017 in Indonesia, as well as planning exhibitions for key institutions in Singapore. He has also taken part in numerous exchange activities in Korea and was a curatorial advisor for Busan Biennale in 2022.

“I hope the audience can make discoveries beyond visual perception by sensing what it’s like to become a new life form and experience coexistence with it, thereby realizing the biennale’s theme.”

Interview by **Soyoung Chung**

c-lab 6.0 Project × Hyunsook HongLee 2022

Artist

HYUNSOOK HONG

Your recent acceptance speech at the Park Soo-keun Art Award ceremony—where you said you felt comforted by the award after having been working in deep loneliness for years —was very moving. It must have been challenging to live as a female artist in Korea, a Confucian society with a strong male preference. What has driven you to keep up as an artist?

It wasn't so much that I was special, but rather that I was fortunate not to encounter any major obstacles that would have forced me to give up. Of course, I couldn't have done it without my family's support. There were times, particularly after marriage and childbirth, when I couldn't really make any serious work. However, it was important that I never forgot that being an artist was my true calling. During the periods when I couldn't work, I would at least take my children to exhibitions or contribute writings about my fellow artists' shows. Some say that unwavering passion is a talent in itself; perhaps my ability to sustain an unquenchable appetite for the arts proved my driving force.

You are often recognized as one of Korea's leading feminist artists. How do you feel about this?

I am always humbled when I am referred to as a representative feminist artist of Korea. It may be because, as a woman, I have naturally created work that a woman could create, but I don't think I can represent feminism. It has been the same for my previous works; I want to express my unique voice rather than being driven by my identity as a woman.

Your work often reflects significant life events, such as your relationship with your father, menopause, and mourning for fellow artists who passed away too soon. How do you decide which life experiences to transform into art?

There are experiences originating from specific places and ones that have become part of me through life. When I immerse myself in these experiences, researching and contemplating them, ideas develop organically that later become my artworks. For instance, my video piece on the Ami-dong Tombstone Village in Busan, which I'm working on at the moment for an exhibition at the Buk-Seoul Museum of Art, began this way. The village was built on tombstones of Japanese soldiers who died during the Japanese occupation, later becoming home to refugees during the Korean War. The idea that the living continues to reside atop the spirits of the dead feels almost surreal, yet it is the reality for the village's residents. By observing their homes, walking through the alleys, and visiting at different times of the day, I find stories that could be translated into art. Fundamentally, I have always had a deep interest in people and society.

Can you tell us about your work for the Busan Biennale?

The piece is a participatory performance art project completed in total darkness through audience engagement. When I first heard about the concept of "Pirate Utopia" from the Busan Biennale team, I immediately thought of anarchism. To implement the concepts of achieving true equality, recognizing non-human entities, and utilizing unfamiliar sensory organs, I decided to create this work in a dark space, free from visual distractions.

In this performance, the visitors become critters and experience senses not commonly used when following the guide's instructions to take specific motions and make sounds. To promote feelings of disorientation, I'm designing the walls to be curved instead of flat to upend audience expectations; meanwhile, dissonant sounds originating from the ceiling and floor stimulate visitors to envision encountering imaginary creatures. Additionally, guests experience a shift in spatial perception when lying on the floor and lifting their legs, defying gravity; concurrently, a controlled olfactory experience comprised of unfamiliar scents wafting from the ceiling inspires conjecture about entities beyond humankind. The final stage of the experience involves wearing masks and roaming the museum, further expanding their experience.

I hope the audience can make discoveries beyond visual perception by sensing what it's like to become a new life form and experience coexistence with it, thereby realizing the biennale's theme.

Many of your works, including this one and *the Eight Lighthouses (2021)* from your well-received solo exhibition Swoosh, *Tsu-pu!* at ARKO Art Center, involve audience participation. What role does the audience play in your work?

The audience is a crucial element in my work. Instead of simply using the artwork as a means to convey my thoughts, I prefer to offer the audience a new way to think, with the artwork serving more as a tool or mechanism. I feel satisfied when my work, serving as a facilitator or caregiver, becomes a stage that supports the audience's experience.

What are your plans moving forward?

I'm preparing for the *Title Match* exhibition at the Buk-Seoul Museum of Art. To fit this exhibition space, I'm researching ways to adapt my previous works and the new video project about Ami-dong Tombstone Village in Busan. I will probably continue my work, driven by the tasks at hand and my interest in people and society.

Photo by Hongsoon Park

Hyunsook HongLee (b. 1958)
Hyunsook HongLee has been exploring solidarity and symbiosis with non-human and marginalized beings. She seeks to decetralize from mainstream human existence through her daily practice and training. Focusing on expanding into the senses other than vision, HongLee examines the sounds that the body can make in various ways, as well as the physical senses of touching, hearing, smelling, and tasting, enhancing them to create leaping momentary experiences and a place of synaesthesia that transcends the boundary between human and non-human. HongLee's work consists of video, installation, performance, and writing, and she also appears as a subject in her work to subvert the performative aspects of everyday life.

"Nowadays, it feels frustrating and almost futile to create art when everything seems destined to get flooded. This sense of despair and helplessness is embodied in the pirate ship. [---] However, despite all the uncertainty surrounding our future, I wanted to express the fact that we are all on the same ship, which provides some comfort and the possibility for cooperation."

Interview by **Dokyung Ha**

Artist

JEONG A BANG

Rough Waves of Desire Acrylic on canvas, 91.0×116.8cm, 2023

The theme of this year's Busan Biennale was inspired by the concepts of "Pirate Enlightenment" and "Buddhist Enlightenment." How did you find a connection between this theme and your work?

I once visited Unmunsa, a Buddhist temple in Cheongdo, Gyeongsangbuk-do, where I encountered the "nasang" statues. These statues are characterized by their humorous depiction of the arhats, and I was fascinated by the expressions of the 500 arhats. Unlike Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, arhats are human, embodying birth, aging, sickness, and death, while striving for enlightenment, and thus they are positioned between ordinary sentient beings and the Bodhisattva. These statues can be commonly found in temples, and I kept their images in my mind for a long time. When I first heard the theme of this year's Busan Biennale, the associated ideas—the community culture of pirates, their wandering lives across the sea, living unattached, and the concept of enlightenment—came to me overlapping with these arhats. Just as ultimate truth transcends the world, I thought pirate utopias, Buddhist sanctuaries, and the concept of enlightenment are interconnected. This led me to revisit several keywords I had been contemplating and to start sketching.

Could you tell us about the works you are submitting for the biennale?

I have always been interested in witches. In the past, a common method to identify witches was to drown them. If they died, they were not witches; if they survived, they were deemed witches—an absurd test. Many intelligent and wise women who could threaten the established social order, including excellent doctors and philosophers, were accused of being witches and killed. While preparing for this piece, I thought of witches. Since all the arhat statues in Korea are depicted as male, I replaced the arhats with witches in my work, portraying the enlightened beings drowning in water as female figures.

Doesn't your submission include a work featuring the iconography of a ship, closely connected to the theme of the biennale?

Yes, my key piece for this exhibition features the iconography of a pirate ship. The ship, as an object, is fluid and dynamic. I envisioned the ship as a vessel containing our hearts as we navigate through life today. The ship I depicted on the canvas is about the size of a small pleasure boat; it is slightly larger than a typical fishing boat and not considered very safe. All passengers on this ship must wear life vests, but these vests evoke trauma for Koreans. I am alluding to the tragic accident on April 16, 2014, when the Sewol ferry sank off the coast near Jindo while en route from Incheon to Jeju, resulting in the death or disappearance of 304 out of 476 passengers. While preparing, I couldn't help but associate the work with the memories of the Sewol disaster, a natural intertwining of our reality wherein we can't escape the history of loss.

What story did you aim to convey through the pirate ship iconography?

We are moving towards an unpredictable future. We collectively face the issue of the climate crisis and are struggling to find solutions, but the situation is overwhelming. Nowadays, it feels frustrating and almost futile to create art when everything seems destined to get flooded. This sense of despair and helplessness is embodied in the pirate ship. Consequently, the faces of the ship's passengers look confused and depressed. However, despite all the uncertainty surrounding our future, I wanted to express the fact that we are all on the same ship, which provides some comfort and the possibility for cooperation. Historically, pirates would move between ships, building interaction and exchange. I wanted to portray the ship as a vessel for our collective spirits and as a platform for collaboration and interaction.

What elements in your current submission do you think are particularly interesting?

Besides the two pieces I've already introduced, there is another work that features the barnacle species known as "gooseneck barnacles." They are called "geo-bukson" (literally "turtle hand") in Korean, a name originating from their resemblance to the shape of a turtle's flipper. One day, I imagined these barnacles growing from human bodies, which led me to symbolize gooseneck barnacles as growing toenails. This visualization itself metaphorically represents a process of 'becoming.' The work highlights the path required for overcoming today's civilizational crisis: Relegating humanity's status—which has risen ceaselessly throughout history — and viewing all lifeforms as equals. To illustrate this, I painted a human leg standing precariously on a rock, struggling to maintain balance against a sudden wave. In this situation, it is the gooseneck barnacle toenails that prevent the person from slipping. The crucial point here is that these toenails are a product of cooperation between various species. Through this work, I aim to show that everything in the world is interconnected.

Is there anything specific you consider when installing your pieces at the venue?

Since the main piece features a ship, I want the canvas to convey the sensation of floating on the rolling sea. I am exploring how to create a wave-like effect by using the connected canvases and the spaces between them. One method under consideration is to slightly tilt the canvases. This approach also considers the viewers' varying eye levels, ensuring inclusivity. The key to this installation is to make the audience feel more involved with the painting and its subjects, rather than being separate spectators. However, I am concerned about how well the exhibition space will support my envisioned installation due to its unique characteristics. Despite these concerns, I'd like to maintain the tilted approach as much as possible.

When constructing a canvas for your paintings, what do you focus on the most?

While I believe that creating a well-polished painting is important, I place greater emphasis on contemplating what to paint. Another aspect I prioritize while painting is the line I draw. The distinctive lines that are both indeterminate and boundary-breaking are closely related to the control of force I learned through calligraphy in the past. Nowadays, I am deeply invested in the process of drawing uncertain lines rather than focusing on areas of color.

Is there a particular theme that you are currently interested in?

My current focus is on the anti-nuclear movement. I would love to collaborate with artists of various nationalities who share an interest in this topic.

Photo by Hongsoon Park

Jeong A Bang (b. 1968)
Jeong A Bang is an artist based in Busan. She captures ordinary moments of everyday life while also capturing socially marginalized subjects through her own perspective. Recently, as an artist, she has been contemplating and working on the results of capitalism currently occurring in Korea and East Asia, such as the germ experiments of the US military and the release of nuclear contaminated water from Fukushima.

Six Artists Selected by *Monthly Art*

Jinhwon Hong

Born in South Korea

Jinhwon Hong enjoys observing and intervening in the power relations related to photography and images. Hong is interested in urban developments affected by drastic modernization, the devastation of ecological environments caused by rushed civil engineering and construction projects under the guise of economic growth, and the redevelopment of urban centers where human conditions of social life are uprooted. Working primarily in photography, film, and web programming, Hong explores photography's various strategies for forming relationships, and situates these strategies within specific discursive arrangements towards making the site of events continuously present.

Mao Ishikawa

Born in Japan

Born and raised in Okinawa, Mao Ishikawa documented the island's people through photography. Her photo book, *Hot Days in Camp Hansen!!,* garnered attention for depicting soldiers' daily lives, and the women challenging social taboos. Exploring themes of interracial relationships, alcoholism, and prostitution, Ishikawa unveils humanity's complexities while scrutinizing racial and sexual politics. Her later works critique Okinawa's poverty and marginalized citizens, addressing the region's double colonization by the Japanese government and the US military.

Joe Namy

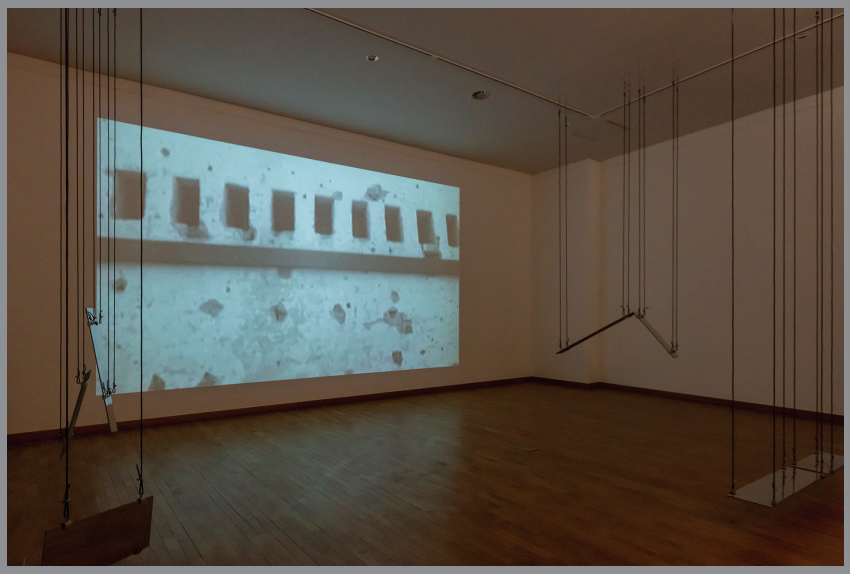
Born in USA

Joe Namy is a media artist, composer and educator. Namy's practice encompasses identity, memory and power structures inherent in sound and music. Their projects focus on social constructs of music and organized sound, like the pageantry and politics of opera, gender dynamics of bass, migration patterns of instruments, and the complexities of translation in all this—from language to language, from score to sound, from drum to dance. Namy has pursued independent studies in jazz, Arabic and heavy metal drumming. Through collaborations with public sculptures and performances across mediums, Namy's work explores the social construction of sound and the political influences that shape its transmission.

Jinhwon Hong
Glitch Barricade (2024) is a solo exhibition of Younggeol Seo's photographs organized by Jinhwon Hong

Mao Ishikawa
Red Flower: The Women of Okinawa 1975–1977

Joe Namy
Dub Plants (2024) is an installation that explores the historically connected kinship between radio culture and agriculture.



Pratchaya Phinthong
Today Busan Biennale
2024 installation view

Sophia Al-Maria
Bull and Bear Diptych
c-type print on metallic
paper, aluminium frame
44×64×4cm each 2023

Omar Chowdhury
BAN+ITS video
installation single-channel
video, color, sound, 22min
40sec; LED video panel,
steel pipes, joints, mesh
net; machetes, iron, wood
(mango tree), varnish
dimension variable 2024

Pratchaya Phinthong

Born in Thailand

Pratchaya Phinthong is an alchemist of economic value and social functions. In his work, financial fluctuations, media alarmism, and the world labour market are transferred into matter, transforming from solid to gaseous states. Phinthong also describes himself as a trader who operates contrary to the logic of profit, deals in cultural and value systems, and trafficks in everyday meanings, hopes, and troubles. Phinthong additionally utilizes currency value fluctuation as an analogy to describe various areas of human action. His work often arises from the dialectics within different social, economic, or geographical systems, and from a dialogue that links these poetic forces to an almost invisible artistic gesture.

Sophia Al-Maria

Born in USA

Sophia Al-Maria engages in various mediums, including drawing, collage, sculpture, and film. Her work is characterized by a focus on storytelling, the power of myth, and imagining alternative futures, particularly exploring the history and alternative futures of capitalism. Central to her visual imagery is the concept of 'Gulf Futurism,' which combines critical rigor and emotional impact through in-depth inquiry and dramatization of language, imperialism, and counter-history. Through her work, she examines and critiques the socio-political, economic, and environmental realities of the present.

Omar Chowdhury

Born in Bangladesh

Trained in Information Systems and Industrial Relations, Omar Chowdhury organizes para-fictional installations, films, and performances which animate the eerie ruptures and ambiguities of diasporic life. Slyly appropriating the tropes of narratology, research practice, political activism and cinematic manipulation, his works and collaborations erode the thin partition between what is real and what isn't—leaving the viewer uncertain about what they experience, whom to trust and where the work stops.

Biennale with Monthly Art

Soyoung Chung

An essay by Professor Sungwon Kim, published in the October 2002 issue *of Monthly Art*.
The artwork shown is Chen Zhen, *Precipitous Parturition* Mixed media 1999.

Alfredo & Isabel Aquilizan *Dream Blanket Project* Blanket sound installation 2002.
The Aquilizans explore the rediscovery of everyday life through ordinary objects and spaces. In this piece, a massive wall of blankets—ones that murmur dreams—was assembled from material collected across Busan.

Monthly Art,
October 2002

Culture Meets Culture

September 15 – November 22, 2002

The theme of the 2002 Busan Biennale, *Culture Meets Culture*, was aimed at fostering new encounters between cultures in the open space of the biennale, encouraging an understanding and exchange of cultural differences. This year marked the first time that various art events, which had previously been held separately and sporadically, were altogether consolidated under the name of Busan Biennale.
The event was divided into three major exhibitions: the Contemporary Art Exhibition, the Sea Art Festival, and the Busan Sculpture Project.

The 2002 Contemporary Art Exhibition focused on 'urbanity' as its central theme, reflecting the key discourse in contemporary art at that time while highlighting the regional characteristics of Busan. With the recent opening of Busan's Gwangandaegyo Bridge—Korea's longest marine bridge—serving as a backdrop, the exhibition's theme reflected on the port city's gradual development, and the harmony between nature and art.

At the time, Sungwon Kim, then an Adjunct Professor at Dongduk Women's University, expressed regret in her article that the event was too focused on representational aspects, with artist limited by a thematic approach centered on the city and urban life, the director attempting to stage a vast urban space in the museum. In a separate article, Taeman Choi, then a Professor at Seoul National University of Science and Technology, emphasized that the Busan Biennale must discover its own unique characteristics that would distinguish the event from the existing biennale.

Taehun Kang *Kein Vogel singt mehr* 2010.
The artwork, characterized by its striking red room, metaphorically represents several incidents that occurred in Korean society at the time through various objects.

Kosei Komatsu *Air's Song* Polycarbonate pipes, feathers, DC blower, servo motor, LED, PC, etc 2009.
The artist's focus is on visualizing subtle movements in nature. In this work, feathers, symbolizing life, are all at once propelled into the air by air pressure inside transparent pipes, repeatedly floating and sinking.

Monthly Art, October 2010

Living in Evolution

September 11 – November 20, 2010

The 2010 Busan Biennale was directed by Azumaya Takashi under the theme of consider italicizing which explored the interplay between two axes of time: individual lives and the evolution of humanity.

Professor Taeman Choi of Kookmin University commented in his writings that the exhibition prompted viewers to reflect on the undemocratic violence perpetrated under the pretext of democracy, encouraging a rediscovery of the significance of individuals within history.

One of the participating artists, Yishay Garbasz, who created works based on the memories of her grandmother and mother—both of them torture victims and Holocaust survivors—highlighted the significance of being an Israeli artist in a biennale directed by a Japanese curator in Korea. She noted that this collaboration was itself a manifestation of living in evolution.

Monthly Art, October 2016

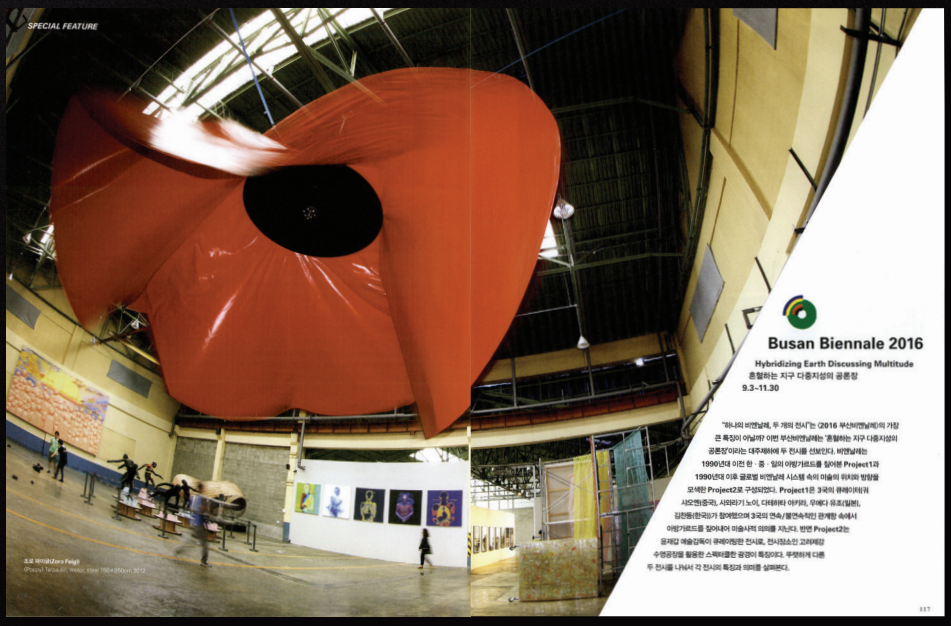
Hybridizing Earth, Discussing Multitude

September 3 – November 3, 2016

The 2016 Busan Biennale brought together artists and scholars from various religions, ethnicities, and nationalities to serve as a public forum for collective intelligence. Under the direction of Cheagap Yun, the Biennale was titled *Hybridizing Earth, Discussing Multitude.*

Jungi Gim, former Director of Jeju Museum of Art, commented in an article that the reflective questioning of the relevance of the Biennale, which had launched belatedly and thus could have been considered anachronistic, resonated with a renewed sense of sincerity in a hybrid society. He also acknowledged that the event succeeded in meeting the public's expectations for visual spectacle, which was justified given the substantial public funds invested in the event, while expressing some disappointment about the excessive, overwhelming amount of information presented.

Occupying another section of the Biennale was the exhibition *An/other Avant-garde: China-Japan-Korea,* curated by art professionals from the aforementioned three countries. This exhibition reflected the growing international interest in Asian art and explored historical avant-garde movements in these countries. Chandong Kim, who curated the Korean art section, was praised for effectively highlighting the characteristics of Korean avant-garde art from the 1960s to 1970s, a period marked by small groups rebelling against the conservative figurative art that dominated the post-Korean War era.



Zoro Feigl *Poppy* Tarpaulin, motor, steel 750×950cm 2012.
The 2016 Busan Biennale was themed Hybridizing Earth, Discussing Multitude and featured two exhibitions. Project 1 displayed avant-garde art from Korea, China, and Japan before the 1990s, while Project 2 explored the role and direction of art in the global biennale system post–1990s.

(left) Project 2 exhibition at the Korea Wire Factory (F1963).
(right) Japanese artist section of Project 1 exhibition at the Busan Museum of Art.

Nahm Hyun *Connected Vessels* epoxy resin, polyurethane resin, pigment, acrylic paint, cement, talc, fiberglass chain, stainless steel carabiner, polystyrene 2022
Displayed at Busan Port's First Pier, this piece draws from the artist's interest in the submarine cables underpinning a global communication system. The interconnected, precariously floating sculptures are reminiscent of the chained vessels used in the Battle of Red Cliffs, evoking the fragility and interdependence of global networks.

An essay and field reports by curator Joohyun Jo reviewing the 2022 Busan Biennale as a whole.
(Bottom left) In this exhibition, Otobong Nkanga presented the installations, and performed *Soft Offerings*, where she and another performer carried a 3-meter-long wooden sculpture on their shoulders, symbolizing the interconnection between land and humanity.

Monthly Art, October 2022

We, On the Rising Wave

September 3 – November 6, 2022

The 2022 Busan Biennale was directed by Haeju Kim, who was the Deputy Director of Art Sonje Center and hails from Busan. With a deep sense of nostalgia for Busan from her childhood, Kim reflected on the rapid population influx and urban development of the city—along with the complex landscape shaped by the intersecting lines of overpasses and bridges constructed for the transportation of goods—drawing connections to themes of movement, change, and the deep sea's life force. The biennale was divided into sections focusing on topics of "Migration," "Women and Female Laborers," "Urban Ecosystems," and "Technological Change and Locality."

Pointing out how city-centered biennales that manufacture distinct identities for host cities often end up fabricating empty agendas divorced from societally effective art practices, Joohyun Jo, the former curator at Ilmin Museum of Art, praised the biennale for the timeliness of its theme and its deep understanding of local context, noting that the event, set against the backdrop of the pandemic, challenged the globalization rooted in colonial capitalist exploitation and called for a reevaluation of the roles of art and institutions.

Tourism Spots in Busan

During the Korean War, refugees from various backgrounds gathered in Busan, creating dishes reminiscent of their hometowns using whatever ingredients they could find. Coffee became especially significant, as 95% of the green coffee beans imported to Korea entered through Busan's port. For those who are unsure of what to eat and enjoy in Busan, here are some carefully selected spots that excel in both taste and aesthetics.

Dokyung Ha

BUSAN

1 Eom Yong-baek Dwaeji Gukbap 엄용백 돼지국밥

11:00 AM–9:30PM / Last order 8:30PM

39, Suyeong-ro 680beon-gil, Suyeong-gu, Busan

Dwaeji gukbap (pork soup with rice) is a symbolic local dish that originated during the Korean War when refugees in Busan started using pork bones from U.S. military bases for cooking. Eom Yong-baek Dwaeji Gukbap makes their signature pork soup using a specially blended broth, prepared by separately boiling five different cuts of domestic pork to enhance the flavor and texture. They pride themselves on not using industrially produced seasonings, serving dishes made from the highest quality pork and pork bones. You can choose from four types of gukbap depending on the thickness of the broth and the ingredients used. For a taste unique to the region, try the "Jinhan Miryang-sik Dwaeji Gukbap" (Miryang-style thick pork soup with rice).

2

2 Dongsamjeong 동삼정

6:00 PM–11:50 PM / Sundays 5PM–11PM
14-62, Gwangbokjungang-ro, Jung-gu, Busan

This restaurant offers a variety of fresh dishes that pair well with Korean alcoholic beverages, allowing the customers to experience Korean cuisine's dynamism. The seasonal menu changes alone prove a compelling reason for dining here whenever visiting Busan. Every dish tantalizes the taste buds with its distinct characteristics achieved through a unique combination and harmonization of ingredients. The signature dishes include Dongsamjeong "Kimbap" (seaweed rice rolls), "Balsamic Galbijjim" with "Chodang Corn" (galbijjim means "braised short ribs"; chodang refers to "super-sweet"), and Tuna Avocado. All the dishes here pair well with traditional Korean rice wine (called "makgeolli"). Notably, Dongsamjeong offers a wide variety of makgeolli, so it is recommended to ask for a pairing suggestion with your dish.

3 Werk Roasters 베르크 로스터스

10:00 AM–6:30 PM / Closed on Sundays
115, Seojeon-ro 58beon-gil, Busanjin-gu, Busan

With its name "Werk" in German meaning "work," this coffee brand symbolizes a dedication to not overlook or neglect even the smallest tasks. Werk Roasters is renowned for its exceptional coffee quality, unique dewwsign, and branding, garnering a loyal following not just in Busan but nationwide. They offer a variety of single-origin and blended coffees, tailored to showcase the best beans of each season. Their signature drink is the BABY Latte, which combines dark sugar's acidity with caramel's sweetness for a smooth experience. Coffee enthusiasts may also enjoy the Tasting Set, which allows you to try two different menu items made from the same coffee bean.

4 Momos Coffee 모모스 커피

8:00 AM–6:00 PM / Last order 5:30PM
20, Osige-ro, Geumjeong-gu, Busan

Momos Coffee is undoubtedly one of Busan's leading specialty coffee brands, having produced the World Barista Champion in 2019. Opening locations in Oncheonjang, Yeongdo, and Marine City, each café reflects the unique characteristics of its surroundings while building its own creative culture on the solid foundation of quality coffee. The Oncheonjang flagship store is particularly distinctive, housed in a rare example of modern period architecture that has been beautifully renovated. The standout menu item is definitely the Hand Drip of the Day, meticulously selected and brewed to perfection with the finest beans available daily. For those who want to avoid caffeine, Everyone's Garden is a delightful option, blending nutty flavors with pistachio and plum syrup, creating a drink that visually and gustatorily evokes a garden.

Ayoh kré Duchâtelet *Hearing Room: Black Magic* multiple formats dimension variable 2024 Photo by Hongsoon Park

TOGETHER

Montaigne's Cat

Gyeonggi Ceramics Biennale 2024

2024 경기도자비엔날레

2024.9.6. — 10.20.

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